

# Politics of Participatory Democracy

Cole Tucker





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## Chapter 1

# Introduction

## Participatory democracy

**Participatory democracy** or **participative democracy** is a model of democracy in which citizens are provided power to make political decisions. Etymological roots of *democracy* (Greek *demos* and *kratos*) imply that the people are in power, making all democracies participatory to some degree. However, participatory democracy tends to advocate greater citizen participation and more direct representation than traditional representative democracy. For example, the creation of governing bodies through a system of sortition, rather than election of representatives, is thought to produce a more participatory body by allowing citizens to hold positions of power themselves. Some scholars argue for refocusing the term on community-based activity within the domain of civil society, based on the belief that a strong non-governmental public sphere is a precondition for the emergence of a strong liberal democracy. These scholars tend to stress the value of separation between the realm of civil society and the formal political realm. Participation is commonly defined as the act of taking part in some action. 'Political participation', hence, is largely assumed as an act of taking part in 'political' action. However, such definition often varies in political science due to the ambiguities surrounding what can be conceived as 'political' actions. Within this general definition, the perception of political

participation varies by differing modes, intensities, and qualities of participation. From voting to directly influencing the implementation of public policies, the extent to which a political participation should be considered appropriate in political theory is, to this day, under debate. Participatory democracy is primarily concerned with ensuring that citizens are afforded an opportunity to participate or otherwise be involved in decision making on matters that affect their lives.

Participatory democracy is not a novel concept and has existed under various political designs since the Athenian democracy. The theory of participatory democracy was developed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and later promoted by J.S. Mill and G. D. H. Cole, who argued that political participation is indispensable for the realization of a just society. Nevertheless, the sudden invigoration and popularity on this topic in the academic literature only began in mid-19th century. One conjecture is that the revival of political participation's significance was a natural progression from the growing assessment that representative models of democracy were in decline; increasingly inorganic relations between the elected elites and the public, diminishing electoral turnouts, and ceaseless political corruptions are often considered as the rationales behind its alleged crisis. Another, as argued by David Plotke, is that the proponents of participatory democracy were originally the critics of 'minimal democracy', a theory popularly established by Joseph Schumpeter. Plotke claims, "In the Cold War, nonCommunist left critics of minimal democracy tended to define their positions by reversing the [proponents of minimal democracy's] claims. [...] Given [an]

unappetizing menu, critics of minimal democracy advocated a sharp and sustained increase in political participation." Regardless of its origin, the recent resurgence of participatory democracy has led to various institutional reforms such as participatory budgeting, steadily challenging the traditionally predominant form of liberal democracy.

The proponents of participatory democracy criticize liberal democracy and argue that representation is inherently deficient for truly democratic societies, leading to the fundamental debate on democratic ideology. Benjamin Barber, an advocate for 'individual democracy', has denounced liberal democracy because "it alienates human beings from each other and, more important, because the epistemological basis on which liberalism stands is itself fundamentally flawed." Barber's notable significance is the return to the epistemological basis of politics and democracy, and in that vein, Joel Wolfe reinforces his hypothesis: "[...] strong democracy should be a form of government in which all people participate in decision-making and implementation. While recognizing that the complexity of modern society imposes limits on direct democracy, participation by all is imperative because it creates shared interests, a common will, and community action, all of which inevitably give legitimacy to politics."

All modern constitutions and fundamental laws contain and declare the concept and principle of popular sovereignty, which essentially means that the people are the ultimate source of public power or government authority. The concept of popular sovereignty holds simply that in a society organized for political

action, the will of the people as a whole is the only right standard of political action. It can be regarded as an important element in the system of the checks and balances, and representative democracy. Therefore, the people are implicitly entitled even to directly participate in the process of law making. This role of linking citizens and their government and legislators is closely related to the concept of legitimacy. The exercise of democratic control over the legislative system and the policy-making process can occur even when the public has only an elementary understanding of the national legislative institution and its membership. Civic education is a vital strategy for strengthening public participation and confidence in the legislative process.

In 7th and 8th century BCE Ancient Greece, the informal distributed power structure of the villages and minor towns began to be displaced with collectives of Oligarchs seizing power as the villages and towns coalesced into city states. This caused much hardship and discontent among the common people, with many having to sell their land due to debts, and even suffer from debt slavery. Around 600 BCE the Athenian leader Solon initiated some reforms to limit the power of Oligarchs and re-establish a partial form of participatory democracy with some decisions taken by a popular assembly composed of all free male citizens. About a century later, Solon's reforms were further enhanced for even more direct involvement of regular citizens by Cleisthenes. During its tenure, Athenian democracy used its system of popular assembly in tandem with the selection of magisterial positions by lot and the election of a small number of high level government officials. Athenian democrats supported the use of

sortition on account of the Aristotelian belief in the importance of ruling and being ruled in a democratic system. By using sortition to assign citizens to one year magisterial offices, and not permitting them to hold a particular office more than once, the Athenian system distributed power amongst a greater number of citizens who intermittently led and followed throughout their lives. Athenian democracy came to an end in 322 BC. When democracy was revived as a political system about 2000 years later, decisions were made by representatives rather than by the people themselves. A minor exception to this was the limited form of direct democracy which flourished in the Swiss Cantons from the later Middle Ages.

## **19th and 20th centuries**

An ephemeral but notorious instance, taking place in the Modern Age, was the Paris Commune of 1871, which married the universal political engagement of participatory democracy with a correspondent collective ownership and management of the means of production, which, like participatory democracy itself, was a demand of the nascent organized left-wing. In the late 19th century, a small number of thinkers, including Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Mikhail Bakunin—all highly influenced, along with their International Working Men's Association, by the Commune—and Oscar Wilde began advocating increased participatory democracy. It was in the 20th century that practical implementations of participatory democracy once again began to take place, albeit mostly on a small scale, attracting considerable academic attention in the 1980s.

During the Spanish civil war, from 1936–1938, the parts of Spain controlled by anarchist members of the Spanish Republican faction was governed almost totally by participatory democracy. In 1938 the anarchists were displaced after betrayal by their former Republican allies in the Communist party and attacks from the Nationalist forces of General Franco. The writer George Orwell, who experienced participatory democracy in Spain with the anarchists before their defeat, discusses it in his book *Homage to Catalonia*, and says participatory democracy was a "strange and valuable" experience where one could breathe "the air of equality" and where normal human motives like snobbishness, greed, and fear of authority had ceased to exist.

The mystic and philosopher Simone Weil, who had helped the Spanish anarchists as a combat soldier, would later promote participatory democracy in her political manifesto *The Need for Roots*.

Students for a Democratic Society organized around the principles of participatory democracy in the 1960s.

In the 1980s, the profile of participatory democracy within academia was raised by James S. Fishkin, the professor who introduced the deliberative opinion poll. In 1996, in response to the emergence of renewable energy technologies, the Texas government commissioned an informed public opinion poll, also known as a deliberative poll, to gage citizens' willingness to pursue alternative energies. Prior to deliberation, a raw opinion poll was taken in which Texans were asked whether they were

willing to pay more on monthly utility bills to support renewable energy. After the initial poll, a representative sample of citizens was provided non-partisan briefing books and invited to deliberate in the presence of moderators. Following a weekend of deliberation, the participants developed informed opinions that significantly diverged from their raw opinions. Before deliberation, fifty-two percent of participants supported a two to five dollar increase on monthly utility bills to support renewable energy. By the end of the experiment, participant support increased to eighty-four percent. The results of the informed public opinion poll deeply influenced the actions of the Texas government and electric power industry; though Texas was the forty-ninth largest producer of renewable energy in the United States in 1996, it now leads the nation in the production of the wind power.

Experiments in forms of participatory democracy that took place within a wider framework of representative democracy began in cities around the world, with an early adopter being Brazil's Porto Alegre. A World Bank study found that participatory democracy in these cities seemed to result in considerable improvement in the quality of life for residents.

## **Social Movements**

In the early-21st century, low-profile experiments in participatory democracy began to spread throughout South and North America, to China and across the European Union. A partial example in the USA occurred with drawing up the plans to rebuild New

Orleans after 2005's Hurricane Katrina, with thousands of ordinary citizens involved in drafting and approving the plan.

In recent years, social media have led to changes in the conduct of participatory democracy. In the 2016 United States elections social media spread news and many politicians used social-media outlets like Twitter to attract voters. Social media has helped to organize movements to demand change. Mainly through hashtags, citizens join political conversations with differing view-points. To promote public interest and involvement, local governments have started using social media to make decisions based on public feedback. Though it requires much commitment, citizens have organized committees to highlight local needs and appoint budget delegates who work with the citizens and city agencies. In the Russian Federation, President Vladimir Putin's annual *Direct Line* television Q&A sessions, wherein he answers a selection of the hundreds of thousands of questions which Russians submit via telephones or social media, provides a degree of participation for ordinary citizens - an updated, more interactive version of fireside chats.

In 2011 participatory democracy became a notable feature of the Occupy movement, a movement largely started by a Tumblr post (titled "We Are the 99 Percent") protesting and claiming that a few individuals held all the power. Occupy camps around the world made decisions based on the outcome of working groups where every protester had their say, and by general assemblies where the decisions taken by working groups were effectively aggregated



together. Their decision process combined equality, mass participation, and deliberation.

## **Citizens' Assemblies**

Participatory democracy has been practiced more frequently as of late on account of a rise of government commissioned citizens' conventions that seek to address specific policy or constitutional issues. Participants in citizens' assemblies are typically chosen through sortition with stratified sampling to increase the representative nature of the body. Assemblies are then divided into groups to explore specific topics in greater depth, guided by the testimony of experts. Deliberation is led by professional facilitators and legal experts aid in the formulation of policy proposals or constitutional amendments in legal language. The reports of the assemblies are often put to referenda or used to advise government bodies.

In 2011, in response to growing distrust between citizens and the government following a 2008 economic crisis, Ireland authorized the use of a citizens' assembly titled "We the Citizens" to pilot the use of a participatory democratic body to increase political legitimacy. Having found an increase in efficacy and interest in governmental functions, as well as significant shifts in opinion on contested issues like taxation, Ireland sanctioned a citizens' assembly with legal remit. In 2012, Ireland held a Constitutional Convention to discuss proposed amendments to the Constitution. Ten issues were discussed in total with proposals ranging from reducing the voting age to 17 to including a provision for same

sex marriage. The citizens' convention embraced a hybrid model: participants included sixty-six individuals from the greater population, thirty-three legislators from the Irish Parliament, and chairman Tom Arnold. At the end of the fourteenth month of the Constitutional Convention, several of the citizens' recommendations were put to referenda. The Thirty-fourth Amendment to the Irish Constitution, the Marriage Equality Act, was signed into law following a successful referendum with success attributed in part to the deliberation of the 2012 Constitutional Convention. In the next iteration of citizens' assemblies in Ireland in 2016-2018, the Assembly, now composed of ninety-nine ordinary citizens and one chairperson appointed by the government, was tasked with considering whether the Eighth Amendment should be removed from the Constitution, along with other issues of referendums, population aging, and climate change. The Eighth Amendment banned abortion in nearly all instances by recognizing a constitutional right to life. Debate occurred over a five month period and a secret-ballot vote was held at the end of the convention with members voting to replace the Eighth Amendment with a new provision authorizing the Irish Parliament to legislate abortion. The proposals of the assembly were put up to a countrywide referendum and sixty-six percent voted to repeal the Eighth Amendment. The two-thirds vote in favor of repealing the Eighth Amendment closely aligned with the vote taken internally in the citizens' assembly, suggesting the representative nature of the randomly chosen participants. In response to the Yellow vests movement, the French government organized the "Grand National Debate" in early 2019 to allow one hundred randomly selected citizens in

each of eighteen regional conventions to deliberate on issues that the citizens valued the most to inform government action. At the end of the Grand National Debate, President Macron committed to the creation of a dedicated citizens' assembly to discuss climate change: the Citizens' Climate Convention (CCC). The CCC was designed to serve as a legislative body, guided by the question of how France may reduce its greenhouse gas emissions with social justice in mind. One hundred and fifty citizens, selected by sortition and stratified sampling, were sorted into five sub-groups to discuss individual climate themes such as housing and consuming. The citizens were guided by the experts on several steering committees that worked to inform the participants on the specifics of climate issues, help citizens formulate their ideas in legal language, and facilitate discussion. At the end of the nine month long process, the deliberation of the CCC culminated in 149 measures outlined in a 460 page report, ranging from the decarbonization of the car fleet to reforming environmental labeling on food packaging. The proceedings and results of the CCC have garnered national and international attention. President Macron has committed to supporting 146 of the 149 measures proposed by the CCC, and a bill containing the 146 suggestions was submitted to Parliament in late 2020.

The UK, like France, also held a citizens' assembly in 2020 to discuss paths to address climate change following the Extinction Rebellion. The framing question of the UK Climate Assembly (CAUK) asked how the UK should approach reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050. Rather than functioning as a political chamber as in the CCC, the CAUK was

used more as a supplemental, advisory body with stricter rules of engagement. The UK brought 108 citizens together to deliberate over four months, resulting in more than fifty recommendations outlined in a 556-page report. The findings of the citizens' assembly helped advise the government's next steps in combating climate change.

## **Evaluation**

Main advocates of participatory democracy view it as an appropriate political development considering the inherent democratic deficiency in representative models. Generally argued as an intermediary between direct and representative democracy, participatory democracy's alleged strengths lie in greater citizen involvement, popular control, and egalitarian and non-exploitative social relations.

The most prominent argument for participatory democracy is its function of greater democratization. Although the extent of how 'democratized' societies should be may rely on sociocultural and economic contexts, Pateman claims, "[...] the argument is about changes that will make our own social and political life more democratic, that will provide opportunities for individuals to participate in decision-making in their everyday lives as well as in the wider political system. It is about democratizing democracy." In such a democratized society, individuals or groups can not only pursue, but also realistically achieve their interests, ultimately "[providing] the means to a more just and rewarding society, not a strategy for preserving the status quo."

Another proposed advantage participatory democracy over other democratic models is its educative effect. Initially promoted by Rousseau, Mill, and Cole, greater political participation can in turn lead the public to seek or accomplish higher qualities of participation in terms of efficacy and depth: "the more individuals participate the better able they become to do so" Pateman emphasizes this potential because it precisely counteracts the widely spread lack of faith in citizen capacity, especially in advanced societies with complex organizations. In this vein, J. Wolfe asserts his confidence in the feasibility of participatory models even in large-member organizations, which would progressively diminish state intervention as the most crucial mode of political change.

The negative criticisms of participatory democracy generally align with exclusive advocacy for 'minimal democracy'. While some critics, such as David Plotke, call for a conciliatory medium between participatory and representative models, others are skeptical of the overly leftist democratic ideology. Two general oppositions can be found within the literature, the prior is the disbelief in citizen capabilities, considering how greater responsibilities come as participation grows. Michels rejects the feasibility of participatory models and goes so far as to refute the educative benefits of participatory democracy by delineating the lack of motivations for extensive participation to begin development: "First, the self-interested, rational member has little incentive to participate because he lacks the skills and knowledge to be effective, making it cost effective to rely on officials' expertise." In other words, the motivation, or even

desire, for participation is a misconceived understanding of the general will in politics. By analyzing that the aggregate citizenry is rather disinterested and leader-dependent, the mechanism for participatory democracy is argued to be inherently incompatible with advanced societies.

Other concerns largely rest on the feasibility of effectively managing massive political input into an equally meaningful, responsive output. Plotke condemns the ideological element of universal participation since any institutional adjustment to employ greater political participation can never exclude a representative element. Consequently, neither direct nor participatory democracy can be truly themselves without having some type of representation to sustain realistically a stable political system. Such examination derives from the supposed impossibility of achieving equitably direct participation in large and populated regions. Plotke ultimately argues in favor of representation over participation and criticizes the misconception by participatory democrats of "representation [as] an unfortunate compromise between an ideal of direct democracy and messy realities."

A third category of criticism, primarily advanced by Dr. Roslyn Fuller, rejects equating or even subsuming instruments of Deliberative Democracy (such as citizens' assemblies) under the term of Participatory Democracy, as such instruments violate the hard-won concept of political equality (One Man, One Vote), in exchange for a small chance of being randomly selected to participate and are thus not 'participatory' in any meaningful

sense. Proponents of Deliberative Democracy in her view misconstrue the role sortition played in the ancient Athenian democracy (where random selection was limited only to offices and positions with very limited power whereas participation in the main decision-making forum was open to all citizens).

Dr. Fuller's most serious criticism is that Deliberative Democracy purposefully limits decisions to small, externally controllable groups while ignoring the plethora of e-democracy tools available which allow for unfiltered mass participation and deliberation.

### **Mechanisms for participatory democracy**

Scholars, including Graham Smith in *Democratic Innovations*, have recently considered several mechanisms to create more participatory democratic systems, ranging from the use of referendums to the creation of deliberative citizens' assemblies. As contrasted with the mechanism of elections, these proposals intend to increase the agenda-setting and decision-making powers of the people through giving citizens' more direct ways to contribute to politics, as opposed to indirectly choosing representatives through voting. Also called citizens' assemblies, mini-publics are representative samples of the population at large that meet to advise other legislative bodies or to write laws themselves. Because citizens are chosen to participate by stratified sampling, the assemblies are more representative of the population as a whole as compared to elected legislatures whose representatives are often disproportionately wealthy, male, and white. Mini-publics chosen by sortition thus provide average

citizens the opportunity to exercise substantive agenda-setting and/or decision-making power. Over the course of the assembly, citizens are guided by experts and discussion facilitators to ensure meaningful deliberation. The results of mini-publics typically culminate in reports to be sent to the government or proposals that are directly sent to the people via referendums. Critics of mini-publics have raised concerns about their perceived legitimacy. For instance, political scientist Daan Jacobs finds that the perceived legitimacy of mini-publics is higher than a system in which no participation is permitted but not higher than any system involving self-selection, like elections. Regardless, the use of mini-publics has grown in recent years and they have often been used to pursue constitutional reforms, such as in British Columbia's Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in 2004 and the Irish Constitutional Convention in 2012. In binding referendums, citizens vote on laws and/or constitutional amendments proposed by a legislative body. Referendums afford citizens greater decision-making power by giving them the ultimate choice in the passage of legislation. Citizens may also use referendums to engage in agenda-setting power if they are allowed to draft proposals to be put to referenda in efforts called initiatives. Referendums may be made increasingly participatory by using a mandatory vote system that requires participation amongst all citizens. However, despite providing the people with additional political power, political theorist H el ene Landemore raises the concern that referendums may fail to be sufficiently deliberative, meaning that the people are unable to engage in discussions and debate that may enhance their decision-making abilities and wielding of political power. A rigorous system of



referendums is currently used in Switzerland, under which all laws architected by the legislature go to referendums. Swiss citizens may also enact popular initiatives: a process whereby citizens can put forward a constitutional amendment or the removal of an existing provision, if the proposal receives signatures by one hundred thousand citizens. E-democracy is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of proposals made to increase participation through the utilization of technology. Open discussion forums, for example, provide citizens the opportunity to debate policy online while facilitators guide discussion. These forums normally serve agenda-setting purposes or may be used to provide legislators with additional testimony when considering the passage of legislation. Closed forums may be used to discuss more sensitive information. In the UK, a closed discussion forum was used to enable domestic violence survivors to provide testimony to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence and Abuse while preserving the anonymity of survivors. Another e-democratic mechanism is online deliberative polling, a system under which citizens are provided the opportunity to deliberate with peers virtually before answering a poll question. The results of deliberative polls are more likely to reflect the considered judgments of the people and are thought to be a better way to assess public opinion while encouraging increased citizen awareness of civic issues. In a form of more local participatory democracy, town meetings provide all residents with legislative power. Practiced in the United States, particularly in New England, since the 17th century, town meetings assure that local policy decisions are made directly by members of the public without any intermediaries. Local democracy is often seen as the

first step in producing a more participatory system; as said by democratic scholar Frank M. Bryan, "For real democracy small not only is beautiful, it is essential." Theorist Graham Smith, however, notes the inherently limited impact of town meetings which focus on local issues and cannot bring about action on larger, national issues. He also suggests that town meetings are not representative of the town as a whole as they disproportionately represent individuals with free time, including the elderly and the affluent. Nevertheless, New Hampshire continues to use a streamlined version of town meetings in which every voter is a legislator, and all issues may be put to a legally binding vote as long as its subject matter was placed on the warrant, a type of agenda.

## **Participatory Budgeting**

The system of participatory budgeting allows citizens to make decisions on the allocation of a public budget. With origins in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the general procedure of the participatory budgeting involves the creation of a concrete financial plan that serves as a recommendation to elected representatives. Importantly, under the Brazilian system, neighborhoods are given the authority to design budgets for the greater region, with local proposals being brought to elected regional budget forums. The incorporation of deliberative processes in participatory budgeting has allowed for a decrease in clientelism and corruption as well as increased levels of participation, particularly amongst marginalized or poorer residents. Theorist Graham Smith

observes that participatory budgeting still has some barriers to entry for the poorest members of the population.

## **Liquid Democracy**

In a hybrid between direct and representative democracy, liquid democracy permits individuals to vote on issues themselves or to select issue-competent delegates to vote on their behalf. Political scientists Christian Blum and Christina Isabel Zuber suggest that liquid democracy has the potential to improve a legislature's performance through bringing together delegates with a greater issue awareness, thus taking advantage of epistemic knowledge within the populace. In order to make liquid democracy more deliberative, a trustee model of delegation may be implemented in which the delegates are free to vote as they see fit following deliberation with other representatives. Some concerns have been raised about the implementation of liquid democracy; Blum and Zuber, for example, find that liquid democracy produces two distinct participative classes of voters: individuals with one vote and delegates with two or more votes. Blum and Zuber also worry that the policy produced in issue-specific legislatures will lack cohesiveness if each group has separate and independent delegates. Today, liquid democracy is utilized by Pirate Parties, groups known for their support for more democratic reforms and greater internet transparency, for intra-party decision-making.

## **Deliberative Polling**

Trademarked by Stanford professor James Fishkin, deliberative opinion polls permit citizens to develop informed opinions following a period of deliberation. Deliberative polling begins with surveying a random representative sample of citizens to gauge their raw opinion. These same individuals are then invited to deliberate for a weekend in the presence of political leaders, competing experts, and trained moderators. At the end of the deliberation, the group is surveyed again, and the final opinions of the group are taken to be representative of the conclusion that the public would reach provided they had opportunities to engage with the issues more deeply. There are many examples of deliberative polling being used around the world: in 2008, Fishkin and team conducted a deliberative poll in Poznan, Poland to decide the fate of a Euro Cup stadium after 2012, and, in South Korea in 2011, a deliberative poll was used to discuss the issue of Korean Unification. Cristina Lafont, a critic of deliberative polling, argues that the "filtered" (informed) opinion reached at the end of a deliberative poll is too far removed from the opinion of the citizenry as a whole, thus delegitimizing the actions taken in the name of the poll. Conversely, Fishkin and other proponents find deliberative polling to be a "poll with a human face" that can be used in tandem with other participatory mechanisms to reflect the normatively desirable informed will of the people.

## **Mechanisms against participatory democracy**

Jason Brennan, in *Against Democracy*, advocates for a less participatory system on the basis of the irrationality of voters in a representative democracy. He proposes several mechanisms to reduce participation, presented with the assumption that a vote-based system of electoral representation is maintained.

In an analogy comparing the perils of an unlicensed driver to an untested voter, Brennan argues that exams should be administered to all citizens to determine if they are competent to participate. Under this system, citizens either have one or zero votes, depending on their test performance. Brennan also proposes a plural voting regime in which each citizen has by default one vote (or zero votes) but can earn additional votes through passing voter entrance exams or possessing academic degrees.

Critics of Brennan, including Vox reporter Sean Illing, find parallels between his proposed system and the literacy tests of the Jim Crow South that prevented black people from voting in the United States. Brennan proposes a second system under which all citizens have equal rights to vote or otherwise participate in government, but the decisions made by elected representatives are scrutinized by an epistocratic council. Brennan notes that this council cannot make law, only "unmake" law, and would likely be composed of individuals who passed rigorous competency exams.

He admits that an epistocratic veto could lead to significant gridlock but suggests that the gridlock may be a necessary evil in the process of reducing democratic incompetence. The epistocratic veto would thus serve as a back-end check, as opposed to a front-end check in restricted suffrage, that still allows all citizens to participate in electing representatives.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Movement towards Democracy as Socialism in Saudi Arabia**

## **The next 10 years: the effect of vision 2030 of Saudi Arabia's future**

Saudi Arabia's future can be predicted by examining Vision 2030 presented in 2018. The primary goal is to reduce the country's dependency on oil and establish it as a global economic, industrial, cultural and religious center. Much in Saudi Arabia's current environment supports this vision with an authoritarian King and Crown Prince and unknown oil and gas resources at their disposal. However, there are a few external and internal challenges of urbanization, tourism, education and a unique economy. Starting with the economy, 35,000 members of the royal family along with military and civil servants expect a living stipend from the government. Human capital too is at risk. With their income assured, there is little incentive for Saudi citizens seek or maintain employment or to get a degree of any kind. While attempting to change, education leaders agree that in the past the Saudi education has not prepared students with secular, technical or marketplace skills. Still, the Crown Prince has

moved forward in requiring businesses to hire 70% of its employees in positions formerly held by ex-pats. Another goal of Vision 2030 is to make Saudi Arabia the recognized religious and Arab cultural leader of the world. Saudi Arabia is well on its way to achieving this expectation with over 19 million haj and umrah pilgrims arriving yearly to visit the major mosques and other significant religious sites located in the country. Businesses and an extensive tourist industry exist to serve these visitors. Saudi Arabia is opening entertainment areas, concert venues and building independent city-states with new technology for these pilgrims, tourists and hopefully other visitors. The internal and external challenges to Vision 2030 can be discussed. The manpower needed to address these goals rests on the shoulders of the over 50% Saudi citizens who are now under 25 and will either accept or reject the work involved in achieving the 2030 goals.

Because of its great oil wealth, Saudi Arabia has been able to make cash grants to those who have served in the military or civil service and particularly large grants to those who are members of King Saud's tribe. Particularly large grants have gone to King Saud's fellow tribesmen. These grants have created a large number of indigenous Saudi's who do not see themselves as needing to get much education or to enter the workforce to support themselves. King Salman and the new Crown Prince have published a new plan, Vision 2030, which envisions society's move from socialism to market based labor markets without social disruption. Fortunately this transition will be occurring under a highly centralized authoritarian government that



currently does not need to cope with participatory democracy, except a highly constrained democracy at the local level.

Love for and appreciation of education is generally learned from one's parents, friends, relatives, and early teachers. This is true of both vocationally useful education (e.g. computer programming, carpentry, etc.) and education for self-improvement (e.g. history, philosophy, etc.). The Saudi Arabians have hurdles to overcome here: (1) their religion encourages believers to suspect knowledge from outside their Islamic religious framework, a framework that was set down with great specificity in the seventh and eighth century in both the Qu'ran and early Hadiths. (2) They have been somewhat sheltered from the massive training requirements that most of the world's population has dealt with because Saudi Arabia has been able to hire outsiders to provide the specialized skills needed to extract oil and run a modern infrastructure. (3) Saudi Arabia has been a leader in establishing Islamic Wahhabi madrassas, supporting over 150,000 such schools worldwide; naturally Saudi education follows this model at home.

Vision 2030 recognizes educated Saudi citizens must acquire needed marketplace skills so they can hold at least 70% of all jobs in the kingdom within 10 years. The question then is how does one insert a love of education into a pampered population that has been living directly or indirectly off of the nation's oil wealth? Vision 2030 envisions Saudi Arabia as the hub for three very important activities: (1) it will continue as the global center of the Islamic religious world with its possession of the holy

sites, Mecca and Medina. The country will lead the globe with its formal political/religious understanding between the Saudi governmental aristocracy and the Wahhabi Islamic purest who by agreement always serve in government. Furthermore, the religious sites foster Islamic tourism from all over the world. (2) The Saudi wealth and geographic location makes it a natural meeting point for a variety of elites, traders, meeting organizers, and business leaders from South Asia, Africa and Europe. However, the former group and the latter group aren't exactly compatible. The former group wants to visit a place with strict adherence to Islamic rules (e.g. no alcohol, no nightlife, etc.) while the latter group is coming to their "meeting hub" to meet and greet but also to enjoy themselves. (3) By leveraging its wealth and the sale of ARAMCO stock and oil, the country will become the financial center of the region. So how does the country serve as a meeting hub for these antithetical groups of religious and financial, business leaders?

In addition to refocusing education and emphasizing Islamic Sunni leadership, there is a human capital issue within the country. Historically, there has been considerable inbreeding (i.e. cousin marriage) within the Saudi native families and tribes. There is hard evidence in Saudi medical journals that there has been significant genetic deterioration in these groups. For instance, Saudi military recruiters have had some trouble finding native Saudi men who can differentiate among yellow, red, and green. At the urging of medical experts, the Crown Prince has required premarital genetic screenings so couples can at least be forewarned of the genetic problems their children will experience.

It is estimated that 135,000 marriages were canceled after the couples received their results. Nevertheless, great family wealth tends to encourage inbreeding to keep the wealth in the family. The question then is how does one discourage inbreeding when there is so much wealth about and the Prophet's own behavior sanctions cousin marriages?

Thus far, in order to keep the modern Saudi society operating, 12 million immigrants have been imported. Many of these people are well educated and have brought badly needed specialized skills to the country. All immigrants, regardless of educational attainment, brought a willingness to work. Not surprisingly, nearly all are Muslim. Of all the immigrants in the country only about 150,000 are Christians. While Muslims may be granted "permanent immigrant status"; Christians can only receive "temporary immigrant status". Since all women in the country have to follow strict Islamic dress and behavior codes, Muslim immigrants are more likely to bring their wives with them in contrast to non-Muslim immigrants. These Muslim immigrants comprise roughly 1/3 of the country's population. In the coming years, will these Muslim immigrants be accepted as citizens?

Another problem, although not frequently mentioned, is that fresh water supplies in this largely desert country are tenuous. Generally a modern society uses about 370 l/person/day. Saudi Arabia has 34,000,000 people and uses only 225 l/person/day. This means the country is already operating under tight water conditions. Of course, a wealthy country, like Saudi Arabia, can increase its water supply by using expensive alternatives like

desalination of sea water. Will Saudi Arabia be able to maintain its current and growing tourist and citizen population given its tenuous water supply?.

The desire of Saudi leaders is to create independent tech center cities and economic zones within the country is laudatory. However, two hurdles exist: (1) most local people lack the education in science, engineering and business to implement such ideas; of course such people might be brought in, but their presence might aggravate other problems. (2) The government seems inclined to separate such activities from the large Saudi cities in the south. For example, the current Saudi plan is to build another new tech oriented city, tentatively called NOME, in the northwestern corner of the country near Jordan, the Palestinian West Bank, and Israel. This area is not far from the Saudi city of Tabuk (Pop. 900,000) and has two fairly good sized non-Saudi population centers nearby, Aqaba, Jordan (pop. 150,000) and Eilat, Israel (pop. 50,000). This part of the country is nearly 800 miles away from the country's southern population centers (e.g. Riyadh and Jeddah). Will a wealthy, conservative, deeply religious country be able to establish a successful independent technological city state starting from nothing?

In order to implement Vision 2030, the Crown Prince has demonstrated a willingness to use state power to crush opposition. In Yemen, Saudi involvement on the side of Sunni Arabs in a civil war has precluded a settlement which might have allowed healing from the conflict to occur quickly. After helping

the Sunni faction to extend the war, the death tolls have risen and healing will likely take generations. In Turkey, the Crown Prince is suspected of authorizing the assassination of a Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, who had published unflattering information about the Crown Prince. Does such behavior on the part of a young leader facing 10 years of major societal change indicate the needed flexibility to achieve success?

The Saudi government is counting on raising \$100 billion for their Vision 2030 projects by selling a 5% stake the Saudi government's oil monopoly (Aramco) to European and American investors. The problem is most oil analysts are not inclined to give Aramco the required \$2 Trillion valuation needed to justify the \$100 billion sale.

The problems are several:

Aramco's expenses are higher than analysts expected; this is now being explained by the fact that several royal families have been secretly charging family expenses to Aramco.

The world selling price for oil has been lower than the \$65 per barrel number used to justify the \$2 trillion amount; this is not likely to change as the US has become an exporter of crude oil rather than an importer, and Russia continues its oil export,

Aramco insists on being paid in US dollars which bothers the likes of China that would like their currency to be acceptable particularly right now because of the trade disputes with the US and because the dollar is so high at this time.

In addition, to the valuation problem mentioned above, there are other questions with this 5% offering of Aramco stock. These questions include: (1) what “on going” reporting to all shareholders will be provided, (2) will the subordination of the company’s interest to the needs of the Saudi government continue, (3) what would be the consequence if the bulk of this 5% stake ends up in the hands of the Russian or Chinese, (4) will the company stop being used by certain Saudi royals as their personal piggy bank, and (5) what legal processes will be available to disgruntled shareholders if they see maladministration or misuse of corporate funds. All these questions should be addressed before the offering is completed. Is the Crown Prince likely to go forward with Vision 2030 if he has trouble raising the money?

The final and most important thing to consider is the kind of governmental and cultural system that might evolve in this expansive, wealthy country in the coming decades. Social scientists have shown us that change is always occurring in every society. Some societies move toward more participation and/or greater freedom for its residences (e.g. United States of America). Some societies move the other way (e.g. Venezuela). The Saudi Kingdom maintains a social police force that compliments Sharia approved public behavior and punishes deviations. The Kingdom has shown little interest moving toward democracy or toward dropping the restriction on political behavior that they place on their citizens. However, in the area of social control the Crown Prince has shown some flexibility. Women are now allowed to drive cars, engage in sports, serve on local leadership councils,

and attend public entertainment events (e.g. concerts, sporting events, etc.). However, suggestions from the international human right groups demand that women should be freed from the Saudi requirement of having a male guardian to direct her affairs. Additionally political gatherings, even peaceful gatherings, are punishable by imprisonment and possible beheading. The Shi'a minority, 15% of the population, remains under very tight control. Will the authoritarian religious and political leadership give up some of its power and control? Is democracy and religious accommodation in Saudi Arabia's future?

The Crown Prince is heavily invested in his Vision 2030 project that will bring both new physical facilities and social changes. While the facilities are visible, the social changes are likely to be more consequential.

A look at a few of the larger projects, is impressive: A completely new Red Sea resort encompassing both shoreline and off shore island development, a complete refurbishment of Jeddah's downtown with the addition on a civic entertainment area on a nearby offshore island, a major push on renewable energy development, a new high tech and business center in northwestern Saudi Arabia called NEOM, and perhaps the completion of the technological cities begun under previous Kings. All this development will cost more than the \$100 billion likely to be raised by the sale of 5% of ARAMCO.

The original plan called for considerable outside investment of both direct dollars and international joint venture involvement.

The war in Yemen but also the royal involvement in the killing of Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey have caused international partners to pull back. The most notable was Richard Branson, the CEO of Virgin Atlantic airline, who has withdrawn from his major role promoting the new Red Sea resort. However, some of the international investors have begun to return to the fold not wanting to miss a promising opportunity. The Crown Prince had hoped that Saudi Arabia would become the “Davos of the Middle East,” a Saudi financial conference held in 2018, but several companies withdrew their initial support. These included executives from: Google, KKR, Ford, J.P. Morgan Chase, BlackRock, Uber, and the Blackstone Group.

All this does not mean the entire Vision 2030 program is dead, but it indicates it may be harder to implement than originally thought. Probably Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will have to give up more social controls so that projects like the Red Sea resort, the city of NEOM, and the “Davos of the Middle East” ideas can become realities. But it is in loosening of the social control that the Crown Prince might be subsequently forced to relinquish controls in other areas of life.

The questions raised in this investigation have not been answered. They identify the tension in the country between the Crown Prince’s desire to refurbish modernize and update the Saudi economy and his desire to retain the Saud’s family control of the country. The longer term future of Saudi Arabia has several possibilities.



## **The longer term future of Saudi Arabia**

Given the level of change in the broader world it is almost certain the Kingdom will change significantly. So what are the kinds of possibilities?

One possibility is it will revert from currently being only the fifth most authoritarian regime in the world and return to its former status as the most authoritarian regime in the world. As modern ideas creep into the kingdom, the number of beheadings will probably increase. The talented Saudis will seek to leave. Most of the positive accomplishments in Vision 2030 mentioned above will be lost. The country will experience difficulty finding partners to support and participate in its major projects: NEOM, the Red Sea Resorts, the “Davos of the Middle East” ideas, etc. The religious leaders may resist moves toward liberalization: democratic councils at the local level, women’s sports teams, etc. The Shi’a who live around the oil fields might find themselves even more tightly controlled. Women will still have men control their movement, dress and acceptable occupations ... if they work.

Another possibility is the Saud family would turn on the country’s religious leaders and openly push them out of the government to demonstrate their bonafides as a worthy member of the community of nations. This would probably trigger a civil war, marked by terrorist attacks led by religious leaders who are currently being sheltered and funded by true Saudi believers across the countryside. The government would be hard pressed to

control the Shi'a in the East who would likely rise in rebellion, fight the religious terrorists, and discipline the now secretive reformers likely to demand more civil rights. The internet which was used effectively to organize the Arab Spring in Cairo would be shut down or be tightly controlled. Tourist traffic to the holy sites of Mecca and Medina would remain steady unless there were safety concerns. Tourism to the Red Sea resorts would decline. Non-Saudis in NEOM and other advanced learning and research sites would likely leave. Even the country's enormous oil revenues could hardly sustain such disruption. Which group would win is impossible to predict. The only thing very likely to happen (without US intervention) would be Shi'a success in taking many of the oil fields away from the Saudis, probably with the help of the Iranians. It is unlikely they would become a province of Iran, but they could operate their own small country, like Kuwait.

A final possibility would be to continue gradual liberalizations. This would require forgoing dramatic killings (e.g. Jamal Khashoggi) and winding down the war in Yemen. There should be a program that allows the non-citizen Muslims to become citizens of Saudi Arabia. Perhaps granting birthright citizenship would make the process of merger between the two groups gradual. To solve the cousin marriage problem, a bonus program might be established wherein a marriage contracted by an immigrant family member and a Saudi family member would earn a \$100,000 bonus. The money flowing to the descendants of King Saud could be curtailed significantly perhaps by the total of the \$100,000 bonuses paid above. Perhaps the Crown Prince might

set up an elected national advisory council with 10 advisories from each million population. Electing these advisors might get the people used to debating the qualifications of candidates and to the idea of going to the polls regularly to vote. The Kingdom might very gradually evolve into the structure found in England with a figurehead monarch and an “advisory council/parliament” eventually holding the real power.

The role of the Islamic religion is the major variable in this situation because conservative religious leaders do not like being forced to simply advise or urge people to do what their religion promotes and proscribes. Such leaders like the state to assist them in gaining compliance. In Western Europe there was a bloody war fought for 30 years when the Lutherans of Northern Germany wanted to be free of Catholic proscriptions. It will require a firm leadership style to liberalize Saudi Arabia without causing the religious leaders to go into open revolt and take their conservative followers with them. It should be noted that neither Catholics nor Lutherans could find an authority for the Catholic demands and proscriptions in their holy book, the Bible. However, in Saudi Arabia both the progressives and the religious conservatives acknowledge their Holy Book, the Quran, contains the demands and proscriptions that the religious leaders advocate. In addition, the Catholics of Europe had a method for revising their many “questionable” requirements (e.g. Councils of the Church, statements by the Pope, etc.) whereas the Islamic world has no definitive way or process to revise the rules found in the Qu’ran. It is very difficult to “modify” the exact words of

God as revealed to the Prophet Mohammed. Such modifications are unlikely to occur. Who is man to reinterpret the word of God?

So which path is likely to emerge in Saudi Arabia? The gradual liberalization path seems the most likely to continue going forward. The only questions are the tempo of change and the degree of change. The central question is will the change include some democracy at the national level? The Crown Prince seems to be a very proud, strong willed, self-confident man who is not afraid of enacting violence. He has one wife and four children. This speaks to the respect he has for his wife who is also a member of his tribe. Today he is relatively young and he has the confidence of his failing father, King Salman. In the present with the King living and supporting him, Mohammed bin Salman is continuing to move quickly to embrace change. With this in mind, the changes are likely to continue, but they are more likely to be focused on social areas and avoid governmental structures. There will be push back from the religious leaders. As the Crown Prince grows older, these two forces of social and governmental structures are likely to slow the tempo of change and to be less dramatic. Will the other interested groups be generating counter forces to keep the progressive changes coming? It is not likely but possible. There are three such counter force groups: the Shi'a, the Muslim immigrants, and the important new arrivals with special skills that Vision 2030 will bring to the country in the coming decades. These will represent perhaps 50% of the people present in the land, but they will have few effective ways to communicate with each other or existing forums through

which they might be heard such as Rotary, political parties or the Chamber of Commerce.

A warning is needed should some national level democracy develop. A participatory democracy requires such things as the education of voters in government, civics, and the history of democratic successes and failures. This sort of education is completely lacking in Saudi Arabia today. Any democratic change should be implemented slowly so the educational component can be infused into the schools completely. The failure to educate the common men and women will lead to a credulous electorate that can be easily misled by propaganda and unrealistic political promises.

A few concluding thoughts on perhaps the most intractable problems described above:

To move from authoritarian (kingdom) government to democratic government (particularly a fully participatory democracy) requires not only the historical and civics education of the people, but at an even more basic level, there must be at least a general feeling of mutual self-respect for “the other”, a basic feeling of equality among all people (e.g. of the Sunni for the Shi’a, of men for women, of the Crown Prince for Jamal Khasogghi, of the rich Muslim student for her visiting Christian teacher, etc.). Islam, as a world force, achieved its greatest success in the seventh through the sixteenth centuries by actualizing an opposite sense (i.e. of Muslims over non-Muslims, of men over women, etc.). The current educational system reinforces loyalty to the King, Islam

and tribal superiority. Equality is not fostered in the government, religion, social or educational systems.

To reduce the increase of physical and mental abnormalities within the nation's gene pool, the nation will have to instigate a major push to get citizens to at least think about marrying people that their parents would never consider appropriate. This "push" could take the form of stipends or social status. Because Islam sanctions cousin marriage, the religious leaders will have to be involved.

Will Saudi Arabia move toward democracy as socialism falters? The interaction of lower oil prices and growing number of Saudi's receiving stipends is sustainable in the near future. However, the social and Islamic religious structures argue against a participatory democracy. Socialism may falter but a turn toward democracy would threaten the power of the King, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the religious leaders.

And finally, the authors of this chapter come to their task with internal "frames of reference" that have been heavily influenced by the enlightenment and western Christianity. They have attempted to understand the Saudi Arabian mind set through study and interpersonal contacts both in America and, in the case of the lead author, in the Middle East as well. However, they know they can never fully predict the impact of the culture, the religion, and the effect of extended family relationships which have been internalized by the people of Saudi Arabia. These

factors will, in the long run, have the greatest impact on Saudi Arabia's future.

## **Collaborative governance**

Governance is a broader concept than government and also includes the roles played by the community sector and the private sector in managing and planning countries, regions and cities. **Collaborative governance** involves the government, community and private sectors communicating with each other and working together to achieve more than any one sector could achieve on its own. Ansell and Gash (2008) have explored the conditions required for effective collaborative governance. They say "The ultimate goal is to develop a contingency approach of collaboration that can highlight conditions under which collaborative governance will be more or less effective as an approach to policy making and public management" Collaborative governance covers both the informal and formal relationships in problem solving and decision-making. Conventional government policy processes can be embedded in wider policy processes by facilitating collaboration between the public, private and community sectors. Collaborative Governance requires three things, namely: support; leadership; and a forum. The support identifies the policy problem to be fixed. The leadership gathers the sectors into a forum. Then, the members of the forum collaborate to develop policies, solutions and answers.

There are many different forms of collaborative governance as such as **Consensus Building** and a **Collaborative Network**:

**Consensus Building** – "A process where stakeholders build consensus on actions to address specific public policy problems; Community visioning is a process where members of a community build consensus on a descriptions of the community's desired future and on actions to help make goals for the future a reality."

**Collaborative Network** – "This system is meant to accomplish more alignment among community needs, strategies of service agencies, priority outcomes, and resource allocation. It's also meant to accomplish building social capital; integration of human service delivery; and interconnected strategies for relationship building, learning processes, and measurement and modeling among the participants."

Over the past two decades new collaborative approaches to governing and managing have developed in a range of fields, including: urban and regional planning; public administration and law; natural resource management; and environmental management. **Collaborative governance** has emerged as a response to the failures of government policy implementation and to the high cost and politicization of regulation and as an alternative to managerialism and adversarial approaches. The field of public administration has changed its focus from bureaucracy to that of collaboration in the context of the network society. Public administrators have blurred the lines between the people, the private sector and the government. Although



bureaucracies still remain, public administrators have begun to recognize that more can potentially be achieved by collaboration and networking. Collaboration and partnerships are nothing new in the political realm, however the wider use of this leadership style has gained momentum in recent years. In part, this is a response to neoliberalism with its focus on the primacy of the free-market economy and the private sector.

Ansell and Gash (2008) define collaborative governance as follows:

*'A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets'.*

This definition involves six criteria:: (1) the forum is initiated by public agencies; (2) participants in the forum include non-state actors; (3) participants engage in decision making and are not merely “consulted”; (4) the forum is formally organized; (5) the forum aims to make decisions by consensus; and (6) the focus of collaboration is on public policy or public management. Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh (2012) have developed a less normative and less restrictive definition, as follows:

*'The processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the*

*public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished.'*

This framework definition is a broader analytic concept and does not limit collaborative governance to state-initiated arrangements and to engagement between government and non-government sectors. For example, the definition encompasses collaboration between governments at different levels and hybrid partnerships initiated by the private or community sectors.

### **Advantages of Collaborative Governance**

The intent of collaborative governance is to improve the overall practice and effectiveness of public administration. The advantages of effective collaborative governance are that it enables a better and shared understanding of complex problems involving many stakeholders and allows these stakeholders to work together and agree on solutions. It can help policy makers identify and target problems and deliver action more effectively. Stakeholders that are involved in developing a solution are more inclined to accept directions given or decisions made. It can thus serve as a way to identify policy solutions that have greater traction in the community. Additionally, it can contribute new perspectives on issues and policy solutions and thus offer new ways to implement strategies for change. For public officials who work in administration and management, collaborative governance can serve as a way of genuinely allowing a wider array of ideas and suggestions in the policy process. It may also be used to test ideas and analyze responses before

implementation. For those who are not involved in formal government, it allows them to better understand the inner workings of government and carry more influence in the decision making process. It also enables them to see beyond government institutions being merely a vehicle for service delivery. They are able to feel ownership and a closer relationship to the system, further empowering them to be agents within institutional decision making. For both public and private sectors, a commitment to collaboration is likely to drive organizational change and affect resource reallocation. Other advantages include combining relevant skills and capacities, as well as allowing specialization. Overall, collaborative governance can lead to mutual learning and shared experiences, while also providing direction for institutional capacity building inside and outside agencies and organizations.

### **Disadvantages of Collaborative Governance**

The disadvantages of collaborative governance in relation to complex problems are that the process is time consuming, it may not reach agreement on solutions, and the relevant government agencies may not implement the agreed solutions. In a complex structure with many entities working together, individual roles can become unclear and confusing. Some individuals act largely in a personal capacity, while others may act on behalf of agencies or organizations. Powerful stakeholder groups may seek to manipulate the process. Stakeholders can also begin to feel 'stakeholder fatigue', a feeling they get when they are repeatedly consulted by different agencies on similar issues. This kind of

dynamic can be burdensome and time consuming. Structural issues also affect agendas and outcomes. Open structures with loose leadership and membership allow multiple participants to gain access to a fast expanding agenda. Achieving goals in such a wide agenda becomes more difficult as an increasing number of players struggle to resolve differences and coordinate actions. Furthermore, challenges arise for implementation when representatives are allowed to come and go with no real obligations to other collaborators. Accountability of participating members, unequal or hidden agendas, trust between members, power imbalances, and language and cultural barriers are all issues that can arise in collaborative government regimes. Critics argue that collaborative governance does not provide the institutional stability and consistency required, and therefore deters progress. The work of Ansell and Gash (2008) and Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh (2012) seeks to understand these issues and challenges and identify the social and process conditions required for effective collaborative governance.

Collaborative governance has been used to address many complex social, environmental and urban planning issues, including: flood crisis management and urban growth management in Australia; community visioning and planning in New Zealand; and public participation in the redesign of the Ground Zero site in New York.

In the UK, the USA and countries across much of Western Europe, governments have attempted to shift the focus towards various forms of co-production with other agencies and sectors and with citizens themselves in order to increase civic

participation. The classic forms of hierarchical governance and representative democracy are seen as inefficient when it comes to engaging citizens and making them a part of the decision making process. Large projects and initiatives require involvement and communication with not only citizens but partnerships with other government and non-government agencies and, in some instances, international cooperation with foreign governments and organizations. For example, managing the growing number of official and non-official crossings of the US-Mexico border has required input from all levels of US and Mexican governments, multiple government agencies (like U.S Forest Services and U.S. Border Patrol), land management, and other non-federal agencies for social affairs. All of these parties had to communicate and collaborate to address issues of border security and protecting natural resources. As a result, the U.S. Border Patrol and Forest Service successfully enacted the terms of the 2006 memorandum of understanding, creating inter-agency forums, increasing field coordination and joint operations, and constructing fences and other tactical infrastructure.

Governing and managing large and growing metropolitan urban areas, covering numerous local governments and various levels of State and National governments, provides many governance challenges and opportunities. Abbott has reviewed metropolitan planning in South East Queensland (SEQ), Australia where collaborative governance arrangements, between State and local governments and the regional community, have evolved over a 20-year period leading to positive outputs and outcomes.

*The positive outputs and outcomes of collaborative governance and metropolitan planning in SEQ have been extensive and broad and extend well beyond statutory regional land use planning.*

These include: three endorsed non-statutory regional plans; two endorsed statutory regional plans; an infrastructure program linked to the State budget; regional sectoral plans for transport, water supply, natural resource management, etc.; new legislation and institutional arrangements for metropolitan governance; and capital works such as the SEQ busway network..

The Government of India launched the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program in 1975 to ensure appropriate growth and development of all children but this implementation was weak. To improve, in the city of Mumbai, they partnered up with a non-profit Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA), to build a child nutrition program for care and prevention of acute malnutrition. This partnership also included the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) to team up with their Nutritional Rehabilitation and Research Centre (NRRC) at Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital. The collaboration between SNEHA, a non-state actor, and ICDS and MCGM, state actors, led to what is considered the only large-scale successful program that implemented community- based approaches to identify, treat, and prevent wasting in urban informal settlements of India.

## **Collaborative leadership**

**Collaborative leadership** is a management practice which is focused on leadership skills across functional and organizational boundaries. The phrase collaborative leadership first appeared in the mid-1990s in response to the twin trends of growth in strategic alliances between private corporations, and the formation of long-term public private partnership contracts to rebuild public infrastructure.

Kurt Lewin was first to apply cooperative system in scientific method in 1947 about individual nutrition in the United States.

In her 1994 *Harvard Business Review* article "Collaborative Advantage", Rosabeth Moss Kanter addressed leaders who recognize that critical business relationships exist "that cannot be controlled by formal systems but require (a) dense web of interpersonal connections". In their book published that same year, Chrislip and Larson looked at the attributes of great civic leaders in communities across the US and found some similar attributes. "Collaboration needs a different kind of leadership; it needs leaders who can safeguard the process, facilitate interaction and patiently deal with high levels of frustration"

In 2013, *Harvard Business Review* authors Nick Lovegrove and Matthew Thomas (co-founders of The InterSector Project), explore the complex relationship between the business, government and social sectors as it relates to said sectors role in addressing society's most pressing challenges; issues such as managing

resource constraints, controlling health care costs, training the twenty-first-century workforce, developing and implementing smart-grid and intelligent-urbanization technologies, and stabilizing financial systems to foster sustainable economic growth. Their research suggests that the future of collaborative leadership depends on the ability of leaders to engage and collaborate with the business, government and social sectors (see below for the distinguishing characteristics of such leaders).

Hank Rubin author and founder of the Institute for Collaborative Leadership has written "A collaboration is a purposeful relationship in which all parties strategically choose to cooperate in order to accomplish a shared outcome." In his book *Collaborative Leadership: Developing Effective Partnerships for Communities and Schools*, Rubin asks "Who is a collaborative leader?" and answers "You are a collaborative leader once you have accepted responsibility for building - or helping to ensure the success of - a heterogeneous team to accomplish a shared purpose . Your tools are (1) the purposeful exercise of your behavior, communication, and organizational resources in order to affect the perspective, beliefs, and behaviors of another person (generally a collaborative partner) to influence that person's relationship with you and your collaborative enterprise and (2) the structure and climate of an environment that supports the collaborative relationship."

Rubin and Brock distinguish collaborative leadership from collective impact, defining the latter as "...(beginning) when we, as a community, agree to a set of shared outcomes and then,



individually, return to our home organizations and work with our staffs, boards, and volunteers to figure out what we - individually and organizationally - can best do to achieve those shared goals." Collaborative leadership is how we align and integrate across organizations.

David Archer and Alex Cameron, in their 2008 book *Collaborative Leadership: How to succeed in an interconnected world*, identify the basic objective of the collaborative leader as the delivery of results across boundaries between different organisations. They say "Getting value from difference is at the heart of the collaborative leader's task... they have to learn to share control, and to trust a partner to deliver, even though that partner may operate very differently from themselves."

Providing further exploration, in his 2015 book *Enabling Collaboration – Achieving Success Through Strategic Alliances and Partnerships* ISBN 9780986079337, Martin Echavarria argues that Collaborative Leadership is the result of individual collaborative leadership capability, as well as group leadership. In this respect, he argues that individuals can support and contribute to collaboration and do so from a leadership point of view; but at the group level, where collaboration can be behaviorally experienced. Echavarria cites the work of Enrique Pichon-Rivière, who developed the Operative Group method for working with groups, Wilfred Bion an influential British psychoanalyst, Kurt Lewin and others and describes the Operative Partnership Methodology for coaching teams to

collaborate (an issue which is addressed vis-a-vis strategic alliances in said publication).

There have been a number of research projects and reviews of key lessons learned for collaborative leaders.

Nick Lovegrove and Matthew Thomas, writing for the *Harvard Business Review*, interviewed over 100 leaders who possess a demonstrated ability to engage and collaborate across the business, government and social sectors. The authors identified six major, distinguishing characteristics:

- **Balanced motivations.** A desire to create public value no matter where they work, combining their motivations to wield influence (often in government), have social impact (often in nonprofits) and generate wealth (often in business)
- **Transferable skills.** A set of distinctive skills valued across sectors, such as quantitative analytics, strategic planning and stakeholder management
- **Contextual intelligence.** A deep empathy of the differences within and between sectors, especially those of language, culture and key performance indicators
- **Integrated networks.** A set of relationships across sectors to draw on when advancing their careers, building top teams, or convening decision-makers on a particular issue

- Prepared mind. A willingness to pursue an unconventional career that zigzags across sectors, and the financial readiness to take potential pay cuts from time to time
- Intellectual thread. Holistic subject matter expertise on a particular intersector issue by understanding it from the perspective of each sector

Madeline Carter, writing for the Center for Effective Public Policy as part of a research project funded by the United States Department of Justice and State Justice Institute, defines five qualities of a collaborative leader:

- Willingness to take risks
- Eager listeners
- Passion for the cause
- Optimistic about the future
- Able to share knowledge, power and credit

Archer and Cameron list ten key lessons for successful collaborative leaders:

- Find the personal motive for collaborating
- Find ways of simplifying complex situations for your people
- Prepare for how you are going to handle conflict well in advance
- Recognize that there are some people or organisations you just can't partner with

- Have the courage to act for the long term
- Actively manage the tension between focusing on delivery and on building relationships
- Invest in strong personal relationships at all levels
- Inject energy, passion and drive into your leadership style
- Have the confidence to share the credit generously
- Continually develop your interpersonal skills, in particular: empathy, patience, tenacity, holding difficult conversations, and coalition building.

Rod Newing writing in a *Financial Times* supplement special report says "If a collaboration is to be effective, each party must recognise and respect the different culture of the other". And traditional development paths don't prepare leaders well for this "traditional management development, is based on giving potential managers a team of people and a set of resources to control – and success is rewarded with more people and more resources to control. By contrast, collaboration requires managers to achieve success through people and resources outside their control and for this they have had no preparation".

Steven Wilson mentions in “Collaborative leadership: it’s good to talk,” four major key leadership traits that all highly collaborative leaders share:

- Focus on authentic leadership; placing the goals of the organization ahead of their own self-interest and following through on their commitments

- Relentlessly pursue transparent decision making; clear how their decisions are made and who is accountable for the outcomes
- View resources as instruments of action; realizing shared goals through the flexible use of shared resources
- Clarify the relationship between decisions, rights, accountability and rewards; taking time to establish decision paths and a common vocabulary that everyone can comprehend for successful collaborations

Chantale Mailhot, Stephanie Gagnon, Anne Langley and Louis-Felix Binitte did a research project to examine the qualities of distributing leadership and the effects diversity has on groups. They found that "coupling of leaders and objects helped to maintain the worldview of the different groups involved at different levels in the research project, while directing them towards project objectives". In retrospect, the differences of each individual increases innovation due to the variety of minds at work. With everyone having their own qualities and prior experiences, the integration between them in a leadership role contributes to the overall experience. In this study, the case was made that collaborative leadership has many benefits and is more practical than just one person solely having the role as the leader.

The best thing a collaborative leader can do is to lead by example. They have to 'walk the talk', and be seen to model the right behaviors. Leaders must show a willingness take risks,

continually question their own ideas, and reward others for their clear communication and valuable insights.

## **Applications**

The need for collaborative leadership is being recognised in more and more areas;

- Public Private Partnerships
- Global Supply Chains
- Civic collaboration to solve complex community problems
- On-line collaboration – Linux, Wikipedia etc.
- Political collaboration to tackle global issues such as the credit crunch, climate change and terrorism

The Government- According to Heather Getha-Taylor and Ricardo S. Morse as part of their article, collaborative leadership has an impact on the roles of local government officials. It is said that public administration is shifting to a more collaborative leadership oriented field, because it helps with the set of skills necessary for the jobs.

Education- According to Abdolhamid Arbabi and Vali Mehdinezhad collaborative leadership adds to cooperation which allows for adaptability and consistency. It “increases organizational commitment and decreases employee resistance to changes.” There is a significant correlation between the teachers self-efficiency and the principles style of collaborative leadership.

According to Gialamas, Pelonis, and Medeiros collaborative leadership allows for leaders to work together. It allows for a better adaptability to change which in turn allows for “growth and development.”

Health Services- According to Markle-Reid, Dykeman, Ploeg, Stradiotto, Andrews, Bonomo, & Stradiotto, collaborative leadership in the Health area will allow for a more widespread set of skills required to help the patients. An example brought up is the idea that the elderly do not receive the help they require because the people do not know how to react in the given case. They know what to do, but when confronted by the situation they do not know how to act. Collaborative leadership will allow for the skills necessary as well as a uniform set of actions they must follow.

An Ipsos MORI research report published in 2007 found that relationship management and collaborative leadership were the top two qualities or capabilities that Directors of organisations involved in large business partnerships would have liked to have had more access to when setting up or running a partnership.

## **Shared leadership**

**Shared leadership** is a leadership style that broadly distributes leadership responsibility, such that people within a team and organization lead each other. It has frequently been compared to horizontal leadership, distributed leadership, and collective leadership and is most contrasted with more traditional "vertical"

or "hierarchical" leadership that resides predominantly with an individual instead of a group.

Shared leadership can be defined in a number of ways, but all definitions describe a similar phenomenon: team leadership by more than just an appointed leader. Below are examples from researchers in this field:

- Yukl (1989): "Individual members of a team engaging in activities that influence the team and other team members."
- Pearce and Sims (2001): "Leadership that emanates from members of teams, and not simply from the appointed leader."
- Pearce and Conger (2003): "A dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals and groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both." They also added that "this influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence".
- Carson, Tesluck, and Marrone (2007): "An emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members."
- Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, and Bergman (2012): "Shared leadership occurs when two or more members engage in the leadership of the team in an effort to influence and direct fellow members to maximize team effectiveness."



- Hoch, J. E. (2013): "Reflects a situation where multiple team members engage in leadership and is characterized by collaborative decision-making and shared responsibility for outcomes."

Shared leadership is also commonly thought of as the "serial emergence" of multiple leaders over the life of a team, stemming from interactions among team members in which at least one team member tries to influence other members or the team in general. While the definition clearly has several variants, they all make the fundamental distinction between shared leadership and more traditional notions of hierarchical leadership. As Pearce, Manz and Sims (2009) summarize, all definitions of shared leadership consistently include a "process of influence" that is "built upon more than just downward influence on subordinates or followers by an appointed or elected leader." Nearly all concepts of shared leadership entail the practice of "broadly sharing power and influence among a set of individuals rather than centralizing it in the hands of a single individual who acts in the clear role of a dominant superior." Therefore, shared leadership is an emergent team property of mutual influence and shared responsibility among team members, whereby they lead each other toward goal achievement. It differs from team leadership, team processes and team work in that shared leadership describes a set of cooperatively oriented cognitions, attitudes, and actions through which team members convert member inputs to team outputs.

Though a relatively new phenomenon in the literature, the concept of shared leadership can actually be traced back several centuries. In a 2002 paper, David Sally noted that shared leadership was present even in the early days of Republican Rome. Indeed, during those ancient times, Rome "had a successful system of co-leadership that lasted for over four centuries. This structure of co-leadership was so effective that it extended from the lower levels of the Roman magistracy to the very top position, that of consul." (Sally, 2002) Despite such early incantations of the practice, however, most of the scholarly work on leadership has still been predominantly focused on the study of leadership in its hierarchical form. Leadership is conceived around a single individual – the leader – and how that person inspires, entices, commands, cajoles and controls followers. Research on shared leadership instead departs from the notion that leadership may well be studied as a collective phenomenon, as activities involving several individuals beyond the formally appointed manager.

There are some earlier conceptualizations of shared leadership. In 1924, Mary Parker Follet wrote that "one should not only look to the designated leader, but one should let logic dictate to whom one should look for guidance" (as cited by Crainer, 2002, p. 72). Along similar lines, Gibb, in 1954, wrote that, "Leadership is probably best conceived as a group quality, as a set of functions which must be carried out by the group." Despite these early nods toward group leadership, the formalized construct of shared leadership did not become more developed and experimentally explored until recently. Current research suggest that shared

leadership forms may imply significant advantages at individual-, team-, organizational- and societal levels.

The shift in this scholarly paradigm might partly be explained by looking at the rise of studies on teamwork. Teamwork is becoming increasingly important in the workplace literature as many organizations recognize the benefits that teamwork can bring. Thus, organizations consider it important to investigate team effectiveness and the elements that increase this. Leaders have been pointed to as critical factors in team performance and effectiveness; some have even gone as far as to say they the most important ingredient for team effectiveness. Additionally, problems associated with team leaders are often cited as the primary reason for failures of work involving teams.

With the complexity and ambiguity of tasks that teams often experience, it is becoming more apparent that a single leader is unlikely to have all of the skills and traits to effectively perform the necessary leadership functions. Shared leadership has been identified as the optimal model of leadership when the knowledge characteristics of interdependence, creativity, and complexity are encountered. Thus, shared leadership is becoming increasingly popular in teams, as multiple team members emerge as leaders, especially when they have the skills/knowledge/expertise that the team needs.

There are two main ways that most researchers measure the existence and extent of shared leadership in a team: Ratings of the team's collective leadership behavior and Social Network

Analysis. A less common technique of measuring shared leadership is with the use of behaviorally anchored rating scales.

Many studies measure shared leadership as team member perceptions of leader behavior exhibited by respective team leaders and team members. Often this is done by distributing leader behavior questionnaires (surveys aimed at measuring the existence and frequency of different leader behaviors) to all members of a team. Team members are instructed to fill these out once for the appointed leader and then again for all other team members. Although this allows leadership quantity to be assessed, it does not pinpoint how many other team members are engaging in leadership behaviors or how many members are looking to the same people for leadership.

### **Social network analysis**

Social network analysis (SNA) addresses some of the flaws of collective leader behavior ratings by assessing the patterns of connections that emerge in a team and providing a method for modeling both vertical and shared leadership within a team. SNA examines the relationships that form between individuals and uses these relationships as the units of analysis. In the leadership domain, a relationship, or "tie" as it is referred to in SNA literature, occurs when one team member perceives another as exerting leadership influence on the team. The proportion of actual ties that exist in a team to all potential ties that could have emerged in a team is called network density and can be used as a measure of shared leadership.

Some researchers go further into SNA and analyze a network's centralization, which helps assess the distribution of leadership, as well as the quantity. Network centralization is measured using centrality values that are calculated for each individual. A centrality value for an individual represents the number of connections that individual has with others. The sum of the differences between the maximum individual centrality value and every other individual centrality value, divided by the maximum possible sum of differences, produces a measure of network centralization between 0 and 1, which describes the extent to which connections are concentrated around one individual, or if multiple individuals are central to the leadership network.

A shared leadership network can be further separated into distributed-coordinated or distributed-fragmented by SNA. This distinction depends on whether the formal and emergent leaders in a network recognize each other as leaders and are able to coordinate and lead together efficiently.

### **Behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS)**

Some studies have sought to measure shared leadership through observations of actual leadership behaviors. Behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS) are commonly used to assess and rate performances, and can be developed to assess different leadership behaviors. Bergman et al. (2012), for example, developed such a scale and had trained raters watch videotapes of team interactions and rate each team member's behavior in terms of the dimensions on the BARS. They then operationalized

shared leadership as the number of members who performed leadership behaviors, as well as the amount of leadership behavior exhibited by the team (calculated by aggregating the leadership ratings for each team member to the team level).

There are advantages and disadvantages to each measurement technique. Although all are attempting to measure the same phenomenon and all have been used in published studies, the particular measure that a researcher uses can impact his or her results.

### **Antecedents: internal and external conditions**

A host of scholars who have studied shared leadership found that in order for the dynamic to properly emerge, two preconditions must be met. First, team members must actually be willing to extend their feedback to the team in a way that aims to influence and motivate the direction of the group. Second, the team must overall be disposed to accept and rely on such feedback by other team members. The preconditions specified by Katz and Kahn (1978) tend to be met by leadership sharing in teams by the development of interpersonal alliances (measured by LMX-TEAM) between and among participants as several meta-analyses reported. Carson et al. (2007) expanded these two requirements by describing them in a larger, two-part framework that includes the degree to which a strong internal team environment exists and the extent to which positive external team coaching occurs.

## **Internal team environment**

Carson et al. (2007) propose first that shared leadership is facilitated by an overall team environment that consists of three dimensions: shared purpose, social support, and voice. The three concepts are also drawn from a wide body of literature:

**Shared purpose** prevails when team members have similar understandings of their team's main objectives and take steps to ensure a focus on collective goals.

**Social support** is the extent to which team members actively provide emotional and psychological strength to one another. This may occur through overt acts of encouragement or expressed recognition of other team members' contributions and accomplishments.

**Voice** is the degree to which a team's members have input into how the team carries out its purpose.

The three dimensions are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, thereby "representing a high order construct." Carson et al. summarize the interconnectivity of these three concepts in a concise narrative: When team members are able to speak up and get involved (voice), the likelihood that many of them will exercise leadership increases greatly. The opportunity for voice also facilitates shared leadership by strengthening both a common sense of direction and the potential for positive interpersonal support in a team. When teams are focused on collective goals

(shared purpose), there is a greater sense of meaning and increased motivation for team members to both speak up and invest themselves in providing leadership to the team and to respond to the leadership of others. The motivation to participate and provide input toward achieving common goals and a common purpose can also be reinforced by an encouraging and supportive climate. When team members feel recognized and supported within their team (social support) they are more willing to share responsibility, cooperate, and commit to the team's collective goals. Thus, these three dimensions work together to create an internal team environment that is characterized by a shared understanding about purpose and goals, a sense of recognition and importance, and high levels of involvement, challenge, and cooperation.

### **External team coaching**

Scholars have also described the important role that external team leaders and support can have in the development of shared leadership. When framing this dynamic or antecedent, scholars have stressed the importance of external coaching behaviors. One scholar defines these coaching behaviors as: "direct interaction with a team intended to help team members make coordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's task." Researchers have identified two types of team coaching—distinguishing between those that reinforce shared leadership (supportive coaching) and those that focus on identifying team problems through task interventions (functional approach). Through supportive coaching, external



team managers can reinforce the development of shared leadership in a variety of ways. Through active encouragement and positive reinforcement of team members who demonstrate leadership, coaching can foster independence and a sense of self-competence nurtures among team members. Coaching can also nurture collective commitment to the team and its objectives, a shared promise that can reduce free riding and increase the possibility that team members will demonstrate personal initiative.

A second, more indirect, way that external coaching may positively encourage shared leadership is based on a functional approach. Within this approach, the role of an external team leader is to do whatever is not being adequately managed by the team itself, to "intervene on behalf of an incomplete task." This functional coaching can be redundant when teams have highly supportive internal environments and therefore are less critical to the overall development of shared leadership. When interventions are necessary, however, such as when teams lack a strong shared purpose, the functional approach asserts that this kind of external influence may be particularly important. In this sense, the functional approach can be understood as providing "motivational and consultative functions that enable shared leadership but have not been adequately developed by the team internally."

## **Effects**

Though there is an ongoing debate about the existence and importance of shared leadership, many studies have shown that shared leadership is a significant predictor for various team processes.

### **Team effectiveness/performance**

A commonly explored consequence of shared leadership is team effectiveness or team performance, which can be measured either by self-reports of team members or by outsider ratings, such as supervisor or client ratings. Performance is also sometimes measured more objectively, by using a commonly agreed-upon scale or rubric to rate the execution of a task. Many studies have found a positive relationship between shared leadership and team effectiveness and performance. Similarly, other studies have explored the extent to which shared leadership can predict a team's effectiveness or performance, and have found that it is a significant predictor—often a better predictor than vertical leadership. A meta-analysis by Nicolaides and colleagues (2014) found that one reason why shared leadership relates to performance is through increasing team confidence. The researchers also found that shared leadership contributed to performance, over and above the effects of vertical leadership.

The causes for this positive effect on team effectiveness lie in feeling empowered through the perceived responsibility and self-control in the context of shared leadership. This results in more

engagement of the team members, more team cohesion, trust, a higher level of consensus and satisfaction.

As discussed in the measurement section of this article, the technique used to measure shared leadership can influence the results that are found. For example, Mehra et al. (2006) first compared teams with a distributed (shared) leadership structure to teams with a more traditional (vertical) leadership structure. In contrast to other studies, they did not find that teams with shared leadership outperformed the traditional teams. However, when they separated the distributed teams into distributed-coordinated and distributed-fragmented (see measures section), they found that distributed-coordinated team structures were associated with higher performance than both traditional leader-centered teams and distributed-fragmented leadership networks. Thus, they theorized, having more leaders is not the only factor that matters to team performance; rather, leaders must recognize other leaders as such in order for them to contribute positively to team effectiveness.

Not surprisingly, shared leadership has been shown to increase the number and types of leadership (for example, transformational leadership; transactional leadership; and consideration and initiating structure). Shared leadership enables team members to express their different abilities, thus letting members of a team exhibit different leadership behaviors. Bergman et al. (2012) found that teams did, in fact, experience more types of leadership behaviors when multiple members of the team participated in the team's leadership. Additionally, they

found that each leader only effectively engaged in one type of leadership, indicating that shared leadership lets more leadership behaviors be expressed than vertical leadership. The effect of shared leadership at school is contingent on the key players involved and how they view their missions. Conflicting thoughts on how shared leadership influences student engagement result in a variety of interpretations by researchers. Sharing leadership also impacts how teachers interact with one another, whether they possess relationships where they reinforce one another or feel distant from the organization.

One view is that sharing leadership among more people does not necessarily bring positive student outcomes. Some researchers have called the influence of shared leadership into question, suggesting that the influence of shared leadership is statistically non-significant (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999), and indicating that shared leadership is "not a significant factor for students' participation in or engagement with school" (Silins et al., 2002). Timperley (2005, p. 417) also underlines the significance of promoting the quality of shared leadership activities, emphasizing that shared leadership has risks associated with "greater distribution of incompetence."

Conversely, it has been argued that shared leadership is positively related to students' achievement. In addition, shared leadership enables teachers to employ certain methodologies or instructional content. Leithwood and Mascall(2008) conclude that shared leadership eventually influences students' math achievement indirectly by effecting teacher motivation. Similarly,

a study by Heck and Hallinger(2009) shows that the development of school shared leadership has an indirect impact on students' academic growth in math, mutually reinforcing academic capacity of teachers and students over time. Researchers and writers, such as Camburn and Han(2009), have also remarked that widespread leadership promotes teachers exposure to plentiful instructional resources and the likelihood that they will employ these instruction practices. Camburn and Han's study (2009), however, does not present empirical evidence that shared leadership is associated with students' outcomes.

Other research focused on the impact of shared leadership notes the teacher perceptions. Work by Hulpia and Devos (2010) reveals that leadership practices such as the sharing of leadership roles, social interaction, cooperation of the leadership team, and inclusive decision-making, positively reinforce teachers' commitment to the organization. It has been underscored that teachers' academic optimism, which refer to trust, teacher efficacy, and organizational citizenship behavior as well, are heavily and positively associated with planned approaches to leadership distribution (Mascall et al.,2008)

### **Shared Leadership and Team Effectiveness**

There are three different types of contents of shared leadership, namely shared traditional leadership, shared new-genre leadership and cumulative, overall leadership, which Wang, Waldman and Zhang (2014) included in a meta-analysis of 42 independent samples to test how these types of shared leadership

moderate the relationship of shared leadership and team effectiveness. Shared traditional leadership refers to a task-oriented, transactional form of leadership, which emphasizes maintaining the status quo. Shared new-genre leadership however focuses on transformational leadership and therefore a more inspirational, visionary, growth and change-oriented kind of leadership. Lastly, cumulative, overall leadership was assessed based on individual members' ratings of leadership influence for each of his/her peers.

The studies showed that both shared new-genre leadership and cumulative, overall shared leadership show a stronger relationship with team effectiveness than shared traditional leadership.

Work complexity (also known as job complexity) acts as a moderator of the shared leadership-team effectiveness relationship, namely that the relationship is stronger when work is more complex compared with when it is less complex. This can be explained by the higher interdependence, coordination and information sharing that is necessary when work complexity is high.

## **Implications and further research directions**

Scholars have pointed to 4 main areas in shared leadership that need more research:

- Events that generate shared leadership

- Facilitation factors
- Most conducive influence approaches
- Stages and life cycles in shared leadership settings

Additionally, more scholarship must be done on outcomes of shared leadership. The spike of recent scholarship in this field does indicate that scholars increasingly understand the significance of shared leadership as organizations in the field are also increasingly capitalizing on the many benefits a shared leadership approach can offer.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Caste and Religion Role in Indian Participatory Politics**

## **Caste, Religion and Ethnicity in Indian Politics**

After Independence the Nehruvian approach to socialism in India rested upon three pillars: secularism and democracy in the political domain; state intervention in the economy; and diplomatic Non-Alignment mitigated by pro-Soviet leanings after the 1960s. These features defined the 'Indian model', and even the country's political identity. From this starting point Christophe Jaffrelot explores the manner in which India has been transformed, more especially since the 1980–90s. The world's largest democracy has sustained itself by making more room, not only for the vernacular politicians of the linguistic states, but also for Dalits and OBCs. But the simultaneous—and related—rise of Hindu nationalism has put the minorities—and secularism—on the defensive and in many ways the rule of law is on trial too.

The liberalisation of the economy has resulted in growth but not necessarily in development. India has also acquired a new global status, that of an emerging power seeking new political and



economic partnerships in Asia and in the West, where the United States remains the first choice of the Indian middle class.

The traditional Nehruvian system is giving way to a less cohesive but more active India, a country which has already become what it is against all the odds. Christophe Jaffrelot's book tracks India's tumultuous journey of recent decades, exploring the role of religion, caste and politics in weaving the fabric of a modern democratic state.

India is pigeonholed by more ethnic and religious groups as compared to other countries of the world. Many intellectuals viewed that India is a captivating country where people of many different communities and religions live together in harmony. Indian Population is polygenetic and is an astonishing merger of various races and cultures. Besides, numerous castes, there are eight "major" religions, 15-odd languages spoken in various dialects and a substantial number of tribes and sects.

Politics is the science of government and that part of ethics which has to do with the regulation and government of a nation or state, the preservation of its safety, peace, and prosperity, the defence of its existence and rights against foreign control or conquest, the augmentation of its strength and resources, and the protection of its citizens in their rights, with the preservation and improvement of their morals.

Politics as a notion generally applied to the art or science of running governmental or state affairs, including behaviour within civil governments, but also applies to institutions, fields, and

special interest groups such as the corporate, academic, and religious segments of society. It consists of “social relations involving authority or power” and to the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply policy. Modern political discourse focuses on democracy and the relationship between people and politics. It is thought of as the way people choose government officials and make decisions about public policy.

All over the world, the political processes have ascended out of social environment. Tribes, clans, castes, classes have existed around a social organisation. Economy, polity, religion, family and kinship networks have operated under a social structure. Famous philosopher asserted that man is a political animal. He had in mind the social element. When elaborating the Indian society, it is multi-ethnic as well as multi-religious. Indian religions are pantheistic in which the nature is visualised as a manifestation of theology.

There is an immense significance of Politics in India such as to run the country more efficiently, to manage the country with good rules and norms, to look in the internal affairs about the development of the country, to represent the country to the outside world, to issue different policies for the country.

# **Ethnicity in Post-Independent India**

## **A Sociological Perspective on Its Causes and Manifestations**

An ethnic group is a group of people united on the basis of some shared experience or some common physical or socio-cultural attributes. For *e.g.* race, culture, language, religion, region, nationality, heritage etc. Yinger defines ethnic group as a segment of a larger society which is seen by others to be different in some combination of the following characteristics – language, religion, race and ancestral homeland with its related culture; the members of the ethnic group also perceive themselves in that way and they participate in shared activities built around their (real or mythical) common origin or culture.

Weber defines ethnic groups as those groups which entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical types or customs or both. This subjective belief is important for the propagation of group formation. Furthermore, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relation exists.

Ethnicity involves a feeling of consciousness among the members of an ethnic group of the existence of such shared characteristics. It also involves the process of mobilisation of people along some common point of reference for presenting a united front to articulate their socio-economic or political

interests. Ethnicity, thus, involves the process of interaction between two or more groups. Barthes says that the issue of the identification of social boundary is intrinsic to the concept of ethnicity. Each ethnic group draws a boundary to identify its own members and to distinguish the “we” group from other ethnic groups.

Geertz avers that ethnicity is based on the primordial ties of blood, race, language, religion or tradition and such „attachments seem to flow from a sense of natural affinity than from social interaction. However, many sociologists do not agree with Geertz s views on ethnicity that it is based on primordial loyalty and is immutable. Writing on ethnicity in South Asia, Phadnis and Ganguly posit that ethnicity is a dynamic and fluid concept. Its basis is not pre-determined but keeps on changing depending on the circumstances existing at a particular time. A person s identity is multi-faced and keeps on flitting from one to another depending on the circumstances. For instance, ethnicity based on religion at one time may give way to another like region or language whenever there is a change of interest or circumstances.

Another important concept is that of ethno-nationalism. Ethno-nationalism is on rise in recent years due to large-scale trans-national migrations in the current era of unprecedented globalization. According to Anthony Smith „ethnic nationalism...unlike the territorial or civic versions of nationalism...conceives of the nation as a genealogical and vernacular cultural community. Whereas civic or territorial

conceptions of the nation regard it as a community of shared culture, common laws and territorial citizenship, ethnic concepts of the nation focus on the genealogy of its members, however fictive; on popular mobilisation of the „folk ; on native history and customs; and on the vernacular culture.

### **Ethnic Unrest in India - Major Factors**

India has been a witness to rising ethnic tensions and conflicts in recent years. Many sociologists have, quite rightly, highlighted the problems encountered in the process of nation-building as a consequence of increasing ethnic problems. Kothari asserts that ethnic upsurges and „assertions of cultures in India are the consequences of excesses of modernization and the homogenising trend of modern states and of their technological/educational imperatives. In his words, ethnicity „is a response-including reaction – to the excesses of the modern project of shaping the whole humanity (and its natural resource base. Such views are also echoed by scholars like Pandey and Oberoi who consider recent surge in ethnic assertions a consequence of modernity and that traditional India was free from such fixed identities. However, the noted scholar and Dalit activist Gail Omvedt criticises such a romanticised view of traditional India. She holds that traditional India was not characterised by multiculturalism but by hierarchy which pervaded every aspect of social life.

*Some of the critical factors responsible for inflamed ethnicity in India are:*

- India is a plural society. It is characterised by a large diversity in its population with multitudes of castes and several religious, linguistic, cultural and racial groups living here. Because of intense competition for scarce economic resources and the heightened consciousness among people of different groups to preserve their age-old cultures, India has always been vulnerable to assertions of ethnic identities.
- Lopsided economic development of the country because of which some groups feel that they have been marginalised and completely left behind in the process of development. This makes them highly susceptible to the politics of ethnicity.
- Representative parliamentary democracy in India where different ethnic groups compete for political power by stressing on horizontal solidarity and consolidation of shared interests.
- Increasing politicization of caste and religion. Caste and religious identities are often whipped up by political leaders to mobilise people for their vested interests and petty political mileages.
- Fear among minorities (both linguistic and religious) that they might get assimilated into the dominant culture leading to the dilution of their cultural heritage. Hence, there is an increasing stress on ethnic identity to forge horizontal solidarity. Such feelings have also increased because of the process of globalization and cultural homogenization occurring everywhere. Cultural globalization is even causing the

Hindu majority to assert itself and is spawning Hindu revivalism in India.

- Intense feeling of alienation among the tribes of India because of faulty development policies, leading to forced displacement from their age-old inhabited land and forest, reducing them to abject poverty and destitute.

## **Manifestations of Ethnic Turmoil and Conflict In India**

The articulation of ethnic identity and assertion in India primarily takes the following forms:

### **Linguistic Ethnicity**

Language has always formed the basis of asserting ethnic identity in India. This was well evident during the Dravida Kazhagam (Dravidian Organisation) movement in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India in 1940s and 1950s when violent protest broke out against the adoption of Hindi as the national language by the government of India. The movement gave the call for the secession of Tamil Nadu from the union of India on the basis of identity centered on Tamil language. Because of intense linguistic feelings, many states were carved out based on languages by the State Reorganisation Act of 1956. Recently, linguistic identity was again on display in the state of Maharashtra in Central India, where in the name of Marathi pride, there were concerted

attacks on the helpless and poor Hindi-speaking North Indian immigrants from the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Writing on linguistic identity, Vanaik (1990) says linguistic ethnicity came into existence in India along with the growth of the national movement. To quote him „Linguistic community as a linguistic community did not so much precede the rise of nationalist consciousness and nationalist struggle as developed along with and through it. Vanaik contends that unlike religion, linguistic consciousness is never a powerful contender for separate nationhood because for most Indians, linguistic consciousness co-exists non-antagonistically with national consciousness. Oommen (1990) makes similar argument. Comparing language and religion, he says that language has more legitimacy than religion for administrative restructuring. It is premature to assume that movements for cultural identity constitute a threat to India. In fact, further provincial demarcations on finer linguistic lines are good for the stability of Indian nation-state. India should accept and acknowledge cultural pluralism and strive to build a multi-cultural society. The averments of both Vanaik and Oommen have merit as linguistic ethnicity has hardly posed a severe challenge to the very unity and integrity of India. In fact, the Dravida Kazhagam, in 1960s, got co-opted into the national political mainstream and gave rise to two formidable regional political parties in Tamil Nadu, the DMK and the AIADMK.



## **Religious Assertions and Communalism**

This is probably the most difficult and intricate socio-political issue that the Indian state has to grapple with when it comes to nation-building, especially the communal tension between the Hindus and the Muslims. Mutual distrust between the two communities is very high. The recent surge in Hindu nationalism has further intensified the feeling of cultural assertiveness on both sides. Post-independent India is replete with gory incidents of Hindu-Muslim riots.

Writing on communal strife in India, noted historian Chandra holds that communalism in India is a modern phenomenon. It has its roots in British imperialism and emerged out of modern politics based on mass mobilisation and imaginary communal interests. The British policy of „divide and rule in India sowed the seeds of antagonism and distrust between the Hindus and the Muslims so deep that the process of bridging the chasm between the two communities is still far from over. Communalism is basically an ideology that spawns hatred based on religious constructions. In modern times, Indians have become highly susceptible to being swayed by communal ideologies and tendencies. Huge population of India causing acute population-resource imbalance, uneven development leading to poverty, inequality and unemployment and the politics of hatred and cynicism have created huge disaffection among the people especially among the youth. Under these circumstances, they see other communities as responsible for their deprivations and abject conditions. Such passions are generally whipped up by

religious leaders and unscrupulous politicians for their vested interests. Chandra asserts that animosity based on religion always has underlying socio-economic factors. Communal flare-up or communal riots are just an outward manifestation of this deep-rooted communal ideology. What we have to really fight against in modern India is this deeply entrenched ideology of antipathy and aversion based on religious constructions.

### **Tribal Movements**

This is not unique to post-independent India. The British period was full of incidents when tribes rose in revolt against the officials, the landlords and the money-lenders when they were forcibly evicted from their traditional land. Even in independent India, the tribes constitute the most neglected lot. Their lack of development and displacement from forests and traditional lands has caused huge disaffection among them. This has led to the resurgence of tribal identity movements in different parts of the country.

An important dimension of this is what is called the „ethno-ecological movement in which the tribes are not only fighting against their displacement but also against the ecological destruction of their natural habitats. The growing menace of Maoist violence in India (also called naxalism) in the tribal dominated regions of the country, where the tribes are engaged in armed rebellion against the state, is a direct consequence of their oppression, displacement, poverty and anger against their

cultural erosion under the onslaught of the dominant mainstream culture.

## **Ethno-Nationalism**

This entails the transformation of ethnic groups into nationalities and their demand for autonomous governance or even secession as sovereign nation states. While commenting on ethno-nationalism in Punjab, Gupta avers that the existence of ethnic identity or consciousness of some shared characteristics, *per se*, is not a sufficient condition for the rise of ethnic conflict. It is the mobilisation and manipulation of group identity by the political leadership that leads to ethnicity. He used the term „conspiracy to denote the deliberate and calculated manipulation on which such ethnic politics is based. Gupta says that the Punjab agitation began with very secular demands like demands for the city of Chandigarh, water distribution and territorial demarcation, but it was soon ethnicised by the political masters and given a communal colour as if they were fighting to safeguard the religious and regional identity of Sikhs in Punjab. Delving on ethno-nationalism in Kashmir, Varshney (2010) says that Kashmir presents a very intricate and complex situation. The ethno-nationalism that animates the Kashmiri aspirations for independence has many internal contradictions – it appeals only to the Muslims in the Kashmir valley, but not to the Hindus in the city of Jammu or Buddhist in the region of Ladakh. Varshney observes that maintaining peace and territorial integrity of Kashmir would be the ultimate test of India s secular credentials.

## **Regionalism**

Centers around three main factors: i) fear of being assimilated into the dominant culture and, hence, to preserve one's language and culture by demanding an autonomous state, ii) the skewed economic development of India where certain groups feel that they have been left behind despite being rich in resources in their regions and iii) nativistic tendencies – „ sons of the soil concept in which regional identity becomes the source of ethnic strife. Examples include the erstwhile Jharkhand movement in the state of Bihar and Telangana movement in the state of Andhra Pradesh, the attack on South Indians in Mumbai in 1960s and the simmering movement in the north-eastern state of Assam to expel the immigrants especially from the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which often taken the ugly turn of sanguinary strife between the natives and the immigrants.

## **Casteism**

A rather inconclusive debate rages as to whether caste can be considered an ethnic group. A large chunk of that debate centers around the relation between caste and race. Scholars such as Berreman contend that caste is quite akin to race in its attributes and have highlighted the striking parallels between the two; others such as Dumont hold that the caste system, indigenous to India, has several unique features of its own which prevent it from being subsumed within the larger rubric of race. Beteille says that many American social anthropologists while working on racial segregation in the southern states of the United

States in 1930s found it useful to speak of a caste system in representing the cleavages between blacks and whites in rural and urban communities there. They found strong similarities between caste system and stratification based on race. In fact, Myrdal employed similar terms and categories in his classic study of the American Negro.

During the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) held in South Africa in 2001, several dalit activists made a strong pitch for the inclusion of caste within the rubric of race because of common features such as descent and birth defining them, intergenerational discrimination, and both race and caste as sources of institutionalised prejudices, biases and oppression. However, Beteille disagrees with the whole idea of equating caste with race. He avers „treating caste as a form of race is politically mischievous... scientifically nonsense. Drawing on Franz Boas assertion that race is a biological category and should be distinguished from other social groupings based on language, religion, nationality, style of life or status, Beteille says „The practice of untouchability is reprehensible and must be condemned...but that does not mean we begin to regard it as a racial discrimination...Every social group cannot be regarded as a race simply because we want to protect it from prejudice and discrimination. Cox also posits that while race relations are physical, caste relations are cultural. Further, race sentiments and interests tend to be universal; while caste sentiments and interests tend to be localised. If a part of the membership of a

caste is to migrate to a distant area, the likelihood is that it would become a new caste; not so, however, with a race.

Within the broader frame of ethnicity, to Beteille, caste has a rather ambiguous position. The caste system may be viewed as a particular case of ethnic differentiation. Whether racial differences exist between castes or not, they are often differentiated from each other culturally, in their diet, dress and rituals. The boundaries between castes are also maintained by the rules of endogamy. However, in a caste system, different groups are all integrated within a hierarchical order. Ethnic groups are not necessarily arranged in a hierarchy and they are not always integrated within a unitary system.

However, it cannot be gainsaid that parliamentary democracy in India and the implementation of caste-based reservation in jobs and in educational institutions have led to a heightened consciousness among different castes of shared socio-economic and political interests and a feeling among the members of a caste as belonging to one group. Caste has become an easy tool in the hands of the politicians to mobilise people. This is evident from the emergence of various caste based political parties in India such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (a Dalit based party) in the state of Uttar Pradesh or Rashtriya Janta Dal (a party of intermediate castes) in the state of Bihar. The increasing awareness of the caste groups sharing a common interest and, hence, some shared socio-cultural attributes and the stress on horizontal solidarity has led to what Stephen Barnett calls „the modern transformations of caste to ethnicization.

Commenting on caste-based ethnicity, Rudolph and Rudolph hold that in a representative democracy like India, numerical strength is of great significance. It is in the interests of all castes to come together. That is why there is a spurt in caste associations and caste federations. Rudolph and Rudolph call these associations „paracommunities. These Para communities enable caste members to come together and pursue social mobility and economic gains and political power collectively. According to Reddy, (for Susan Bayly), the ethnic character of caste lies in its becoming an „urgent moral mandate in Independent India, „a bond of collective virtues and obligations on the basis of which public-spirited people should take decisive action when they hear the call to arms. Bayly s analysis highlights the tendencies of caste groups to function as pressure groups or lobbies of sorts, emphasizing their propensities “towards rivalry and antagonism”. on religious differences have not been accepted; c) an ethnic demand has only been accepted when there is a broad-based popular demand for it and d) views of other affected groups involved in the dispute have also been taken into consideration in arriving at any conclusion.

India is a multi-cultural nation. Its diversity is its greatest strength. Forging unity among different ethnic groups holds the key to India s success as a vibrant democracy. This requires multi-pronged strategy – balanced regional development, inclusive economic development, safeguarding the interests of ethnic minorities and tribes, stamping out all communal and casteist tendencies and fostering a sustained interaction among different cultural groups in the country.

## **Identity Politics in India (Caste, Religion, Language And Ethnicity)**

Identity Politics has become a prominent subject in the Indian politics in the past few years. Rise of low castes, religious identities, linguistic groups and ethnic conflicts have contributed to the significance of identity politics in India. The discourse on Identity, many scholars feel, is distinctly a modern phenomenon. Craig Calhoun aptly describes the situation when he argues that it is in the modern times we encounter intensified efforts at consolidating individual and categorical identities and reinforce self-sameness. This is primarily a modern phenomenon because some scholars feel that emphasis on identity based on a central organising principle of ethnicity, religion, language, gender, sexual preferences, or caste positions, etc, are a sort of “compelling remedy for anonymity” in an otherwise impersonal modern world. It is thus said to be a “pattern of belonging, a search for comfort, an approach to community.” However, the complex social changes and the imbrications of various forces, factors and events in this modern world have rendered such production and recognition of identities problematic. This is to say that any search for an ‘authentic self or identity’ is not an innocent and unnuanced possibility; it involves negotiating other, often overlapping and contested, heterodox or multiple ‘selves’. Cascardi succinctly elucidates this by observing, “the modern subject is defined by its insertion into a series of separate value-spheres, each one of which tends to exclude or attempts to assert its priority over the rest”, thereby rendering identity-schemes problematic. Nonetheless, the concerns with individual and



collective identity that simultaneously seeks to emphasise differences and attempt to establish commonality with others similarly distinguished, have become a universal venture.

But the question is how discourses on identity fit into the political landscape do? What are the political underpinnings of these discourses on identity? What are the organising principles of movements that characterise themselves as those based on identity concerns? Can we define movements of workers as an instance of identity politics? In short what is the politics of identity and what are its organising principles?

Identity Politics is said to “signify a wide range of political activity and theorising founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups”. As a political activity it is thus considered to signify a body of political projects that attempts a “recovery from exclusion and denigration” of groups hitherto marginalised on the basis of differences based on their ‘selfhood’ determining characteristics like ethnicity, gender, sexual preferences, caste positions, etc. Identity politics thus attempts to attain empowerment, representation and recognition of social groups by asserting the very same markers that distinguished and differentiated them from the others and utilise those markers as an assertion of selfhood and identity based on difference rather than equality. Contrastingly placed, it is to imply that adherents of identity politics essentialise certain markers that fix the identities of social groups around an ensemble of definitional absolutes. These markers may be those of language, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual preferences, caste

positions, religion, tribe, race, etc. institutionalised in jargons, metaphors, stereotypes, and academic literature and reinforced through practices of positive discrimination or affirmative action. The proponents of identity politics thus, assign the primacy of some “essence” or a set of core features shared only by members of the collectivity and no others and accepts individual persons as singular, integral, altogether harmonious and unproblematic identities. These core markers are different from associational markers like those of the workers who are defined more by their common interests rather than by certain core essential naturally ‘given’ identity attributes of the groups engaged in identity politics. Though many would argue that “worker” was an identity deserving legitimacy and as a group, its movements can be referred to as identity Politics, but probably the term “identity politics” as a body of political projects implied to in contemporary discourses refers to certain essential, local and particular categorical identities rather than any universalising ideals or agenda. The adherents of identity politics utilise the power of myths, cultural symbols and kinship relations to mould the feeling of shared community and subsequently politicise these aspects to claim recognition of their particular identities.

The strongest criticism against Identity Politics is that it often challenged by the very same markers upon which the sense of self or community is sought to be built. It is despite the fact that identity politics is engaged in numerous aspects of oppression and powerlessness, reclaiming and transforming negative scripts used by dominant groups into powerful instruments for building positive images of self and community. In other words the

markers that supposedly defines the community are fixed to the extent that they harden and release a process of in-group essentialism that often denies internal dialogicality within and without the group and itself becomes a new form of closure and oppression.

Identity Politics as a field of study can be said to have gained intellectual legitimacy since the second half of the twentieth century, *i.e.*, between 1950s and 1960s in the United States when large scale political movements of the second wave-feminists, Black Civil Rights, Gay and Lesbian Liberation movements and movements of various Indigenous groups in the U.S. and other parts of the world were being justified and legitimated on the basis of claims about injustices done to their respective social groups. However, as scholars like Heyes point out that although “‘Identity Politics’ can draw on intellectual precursors from Mary Wollstonecraft to Frantz Fanon, writing that actually uses this specific phrase—Identity Politics—is limited almost exclusively to the last 15 years.

### **Identity Politics In India**

In India we find that despite adoption of a liberal democratic polity after independence, communities and collective identities have remained powerful and continue to claim recognition. In fact, Beteille has shown that the Indian polity has consistently tried to negotiate the allegiance to a liberal spirit and the concerns and consciousness of community. According to Bikhu Parekh this process has recognised a wide array of autonomous

and largely self-governing communities. It has sought to reconcile itself as an association of individuals and a community of communities, recognising both individuals and communities as bearer of rights.

It was probably this claim for and granting of recognition of particular identities by the post-independence state of India that led many scholars to believe that a material basis for the enunciation of identity claims has been provided by the post-independent state and its structures and institutions. In other words the state is seen as an “active contributor to identity politics through the creation and maintenance of state structures which define and then recognise people in terms of certain identities”. Thus, we find identity politics of various hues abound in India, the most spectacular however, are those based on language, religion, caste, ethnicity or tribal identity. But having said this it would be wrong on our part to assume that each of these identity markers operate autonomously, independent of the overlapping influence of the other makers. In other words a homogenous linguistic group may be divided by caste affiliations that may be sub-divided by religious orientations or all may be subsumed under a broader ethnic claim.

## **Caste**

Caste-based discrimination and oppression have been a pernicious feature of Indian society and in the post-independence period its imbrications with politics have not only made it possible for hitherto oppressed caste-groups to be accorded

political freedom and recognition but has also raised consciousness about its potential as a political capital. In fact Dipankar Gupta has poignantly exposed this contradiction when he elaborates the differences between Ambedkar and Mandal Commission's view of caste. While the former designed the policy of reservations or protective discrimination to remove untouchability as an institution from Indian social life and polity, the latter considered caste as an important political resource. Actually, the Mandal commission can be considered the intellectual inspiration in transforming caste-based identity to an asset that may be used as a basis for securing political and economic gains.

Though it can also be said that the upper castes by virtue of their predominant position were already occupying positions of strengths in the political and economic system, and when the Mandal heightened the consciousness of the 'Dalits' by recognising their disadvantage of caste-identity as an advantage the confrontation ensues. The caste system, which is based on the notions of purity and pollution, hierarchy and difference, has despite social mobility, been oppressive towards the Shudras and the outcastes who suffered the stigma of ritual impurity and lived in abject poverty, illiteracy and denial of political power.

The origin of confrontational identity politics based on caste may be said to have its origin on the issue of providing the oppressed caste groups with state support in the form of protective discrimination. This group-identity based on caste that has been reinforced by the emergence of political consciousness around

caste identities is institutionalised by the caste-based political parties that profess to uphold and protect the interests of specific identities including the castes. Consequently, we have the upper caste dominated BJP, the lower caste dominated BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party) or the SP (Samajwadi Party), including the fact that left parties (for example use of caste idioms for mobilising agricultural labourers in Andhra Pradesh elections in 1950) have tacitly followed the caste pattern to extract mileage in electoral politics. The Cumulative result of the politicisation can be summarised by arguing that caste-based identity politics has had a dual role in Indian society and polity.

It relatively democratised the caste-based Indian society but simultaneously undermined the evolution of class-based organisations. In all, caste has become an important determinant in Indian society and politics, the new lesson of organised politics and consciousness of caste affiliations learnt by the hitherto despised caste groups have transformed the contours of Indian politics where shifting caste-class alliances are being encountered. The net effect of these mobilisations along caste-identities have resulted not only in the empowerment of newly emerging groups but has increased the intensity of confrontational politics and possibly leading to a growing crisis of governability.

## **Religion**

Another form of identity politics is that affected through the construction of a community on the shared bond of religion. In

India, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism are some of the major religions practised by the people. Numerically the Hindus are considered to be the majority, which inspires many Hindu loyalist groups like the RSS (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh) or the Siva Sena and political parties like the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) or the Hindu Mahasabha to claim that India is a Hindu State. These claims generate homogenising myths about India and its history. These claims are countered by other religious groups who foresee the possibility of losing autonomy of practise of their religious and cultural life under such homogenising claims.

This initiates contestations that have often resulted in communal riots. The generally accepted myths that process the identity divide on religious lines centre on the 'appeasement theory', 'forcible religious conversions', general 'anti-Hindu' and thus 'anti-India' attitude of the minority religious groups, the 'hegemonic aspirations' of majority groups and 'denial of a socio-cultural space' to minority groups. Historically, the Hindu revivalist movement of the 19th century is considered to be the period that saw the demarcation of two separate cultures on religious basis—the Hindus and the Muslims that deepened further because of the partition. This division which has become institutionalised in the form of a communal ideology has become a major challenge for India's secular social fabric and democratic polity. Though communalism for a major part of the last century signified Hindu-Muslim conflict, in recent years contestations between Hindus and Sikhs, Hindus and Christians have often crystallised into communal conflict.

The rise of Hindu national assertiveness, politics of representational government, persistence of communal perceptions, and competition for the socio-economic resources are considered some of the reasons for the generation of communal ideologies and their transformation into major riots. Identity schemes based on religion have become a major source of conflict not only in the international context but since the early 1990s it has also become a challenge for Indian democracy and secularism. The rise of majoritarian assertiveness is considered to have become institutionalised after the BJP, that along with its 'Hindu' constituents gave political cohesiveness to a consolidating Hindu consciousness, formed a coalition ministry in March 1998. However, like all identity schemes the forging of a religious community glosses over internal differences within a particular religion to generate the "we are all of the same kind" emotion.

Thus differences of caste groups within a homogenous Hindu identity, linguistic and sectional differences within Islam are shelved to create a homogenous unified religious identity. In post-independence India the majoritarian assertion has generated its own antithesis in the form of minority religions assertiveness and a resulting confrontational politics that undermines the syncretistic dimensions of the civil society in India. The process through which this religious assertiveness is being increasingly institutionalised by a 'methodical rewriting of history' has the potential to reformulate India's national identity along communal trajectories.



## **Language**

Identity claims based on the perception of a collectivity bound together by language may be said to have its origin in the pre-independence politics of the Congress that had promised reorganisation of states in the post-independent period on linguistic basis. But it was the “JVP” (Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya) Committee’s concession that if public sentiment was “insistent and overwhelming”, the formation of Andhra from the Telugu-speaking region of the then Madras could be conceded which as Michael Brecher mentions was the “opening wedge for the bitter struggle over states reorganisation which was to dominate Indian Politics from 1953 to 1956”.

Ironically, the claim of separate states for linguistic collectivities did not end in 1956 and even today continues to confront the concerns of the Indian leadership. But the problem has been that none of the created or claimed states are mono-ethnic in composition and some even have numerically and politically powerful minorities. This has resulted in a cascading set of claims that continue to threaten the territorial limits of existing states and disputes over boundaries between linguistic states have continued to stir conflicts, as for instance the simmering tensions between Maharashtra and Karnataka over the district of Belgaum or even the claims of the Nagas to parts of Manipur.

The linguistic divisions have been complicated by the lack of a uniform language policy for the entire country. Since in each

state the dominant regional language is often used as the medium of instruction and social communication, the consequent affinity and allegiance that develops towards one's own language gets expressed even outside one's state of origin. For instance the formation of linguistic cultural and social groups outside one's state of origin helps to consolidate the unity and sense of community in a separate linguistic society. Thus language becomes an important premise on which group identities are organised and establishes the conditions for defining the 'in-group' and 'out-group'.

Though it is generally felt that linguistic states provide freedom and autonomy for collectivities within a heterogeneous society, critics argue that linguistic states have reinforced regionalism and has provided a platform for the articulation of a phenomenal number of identity claims in a country that has 1,652 'mother tongues' and only fourteen recognised languages around which states have been reorganised. They argue that the effective result of recognition for linguistic groups has disembodied the feelings of national unity and national spirit in a climate where 'Maharashtra for Marathis, Gujrat for Gujratis, etc" has reinforced linguistic mistrust and defined the economic and political goods in linguistic terms.

## **Ethnicity**

You will study in detail about the ethnicity in unit 26 of the book 2 of this course. There are two ways in which the concept of ethnic identity is used; one, it insiders the formation of identity

on the basis of single attribute – language, religion, caste, region, etc; two, it considers the formation of identity on the basis, of multiple attributes cumulatively. However, it is the second way formation of identity on the basis of more than one characteristics– culture, customs, region, religion or caste, which is considered as the most common way of formation of the ethnic identity. The one ethnic identity is formed in relation to the other ethnic identity. The relations between more than one ethnic identity can be both harmonious and conflictual. Whenever there is competition among the ethnic identities on the real or imaginary basis, it expressed in the form of autonomy movements, demand for session or ethnic riots.

### **Impact of Caste System in Indian Democracy**

Caste in Indian society refers to a social group where membership is largely decided by birth. This caste system became fixed and hereditary with the emergence of Hinduism and its beliefs of pollution and rebirth. The Laws of Manu (Manusmitri), refer to the impurity and servility of the outcastes, while affirming the dominance and total impunity of upper castes. Those from the lowest castes are told that their place in the caste hierarchy is due to their sins in their past life. Vivid punishments of torture and death are assigned for crimes such as gaining literacy or insulting a member of a dominant caste. Manusmitri, the most authoritative text of Hindu religion legitimises social exclusion and introduces absolute inequality as the guiding principle of social relations.

Caste still very much matters to Indian citizens even in the modern world, though one must point out that different groups of citizens have different reasons for maintaining the system of caste. The upper castes want to keep caste alive to oppress the lower castes thereby maintaining their domination. It is very interesting to note that the lower caste groups, who are supposed to hate the caste system, also want to use their caste identity to gain benefits in the corridors of power and politics and, at the same time, they want to put a stop to the caste oppression imposed upon them by the upper castes. It is an ironical and interesting situation of the Indian society in modern India.

Actually, it was meant to show that the four classes stood in relation to the social organisation in the same relation as the different organs of the Primordial Man to his body. Together they had to function to give vitality to the body politic. But the caste system grown to the level of retarding the growth of an individual in the name of caste and there by affecting the fundamental rights of an individual to live or to grow, which is the essence of democracy. How caste system affects the Democracy can broadly be classified under two headings.

### **Caste System Vs. Societal Democracy**

The roots of democracy lie not in the form of Government, Parliamentary or otherwise. A democracy is more than a form of government. It is primarily a mode of associated living. The roots of democracy are to be searched in the social relationship, in the

terms of associated life between people who form a society. Dr. Ambedkar

Caste is the most confused knot of all social problems. Indian society is cast ridden. Religion is just a belief and it can change anytime in the life, but caste is a constant factor which don't change even when religion changes. It doesn't change when occupation changes or social status changes. That is Caste remains constant. It is like a omega value simply a mere constant don't change in any situation. Caste system does not allow for upward mobility in society. If a person's family comes from the lower economic strata, in a society based on a caste system, that person would need to remain within that restricted level.

Caste system affects the society by making the people more exposed to prejudice, stereotyping and other things. These differences in rankings often cause disputes within the society. Caste system is filled with inequality and injustice. The people of one caste don't like to mix with others. This division of society into so many religions, castes and subcastes comes in the way of the unity and integrity of the Indian nation. Caste System is the only reason behind women slavery. It encourages child marriage and opposes remarriage. Women are treated only as sex machine. In many castes', women are not allowed to study, work outside or speak their mind. Caste system is the reason behind the lower status of women in some of the communities. No caste in India respect women rights and their feelings. An Indian cannot eat or marry with an Indian simply because he or she does not belong to

his or her caste. An Indian simply cannot touch an Indian because he or she does belong to his or her caste.

Caste System is the precursor of Communal Violence by continuously suppressing a section of people. It forces lower caste people to take weapons in their hand. Naxalite, maoist etc movements are just an aggression of lower caste people on economic inequality. Limited choice of occupations, which is enforced within a caste as well as by other castes. A caste might follow more than one traditional occupation but its members would nonetheless be constrained to that range Restrictions on dietary and social interactions that define who could consume what and accept from whom. As with marriage arrangements, these restrictions apply at sub-caste level, not merely at the caste level. Physical segregation is there in many parts of the country. These are accompanied by limitations on movement and access, including to religious and educational areas and to basic facilities such as supplies of water.

Since caste is an age old system which is followed traditionally, people find it difficult to accept the new ideal and scientific principles. Caste system discriminates people and it violates all human rights norms on which UN instruments are founded. In its application, Caste has led to sub-human treatment of a vast population. Presently, India's Dalits constitute around 17 per cent of the population. With other minorities, such as tribal peoples, Sikhs and Muslims, minorities in India constitute roughly 85 per cent; the overwhelming majority. To this day, the level of violence against Dalits and other 'lower' Castes is

atrocious. Social degradation perpetuated under the Caste system has very few parallels in human history. Such treatment continues to this day. Discrimination is extended to all aspects of life: whether in employment, education, health, land holding, security, and all aspects of women's rights. The psychological effects on 'inferior' Castes constitute gross human rights abuse and a continuing cruelty and thereby affecting the democracy. We have to remember and recollect the fact that the Indian society does not consist of individuals. It consists of innumerable collection of castes, which are exclusive in their life and have no common experience to share and have no bond of sympathy. The existence of caste system is a standing denial of the existence of those ideals of society and therefore of democracy.

The religious leaders of Hinduism created the oppressive caste system as an essential component of the religion.

It does not allow for upward mobility in society. If a person's family comes from the lower economic strata, in a society based on a caste system, that person would need to remain within that restricted level. However so long as a caste system is designed on the basis that people placed in a given caste have the appropriate skills and disposition for their a caste it improves efficiency as over time people in a given caste will become more specialised at fulfilling the duties of their caste. This however is often not the case and castes are more often based solely on social and economic power, not the actual suitability of the given people's abilities to their caste.

In my opinion, the caste system affects the society by making the people more exposed to prejudice, stereotyping and other things. These differences in rankings often cause disputes within the society. However, how it affects the society depends on how you see it.

Caste system is filled with inequality and injustice. There is no point in calling casteism as a system or a process, rather it is an evil. Indian society is cast ridden. The people of one caste don't like to mix with others. This division of society into so many religions, castes and sub-castes comes in the way of the unity and integrity of the Indian nation. People vote on the basis of caste and religion and do not take the merits of the candidate into consideration. Democracy itself has become a mockery owing to this evil. The caste system can not be eradicated without changing the mindset of the people. The caste system is a great social evil. From time to time social reformers and thinkers have tried to eradicate this evil, but to no avail. Even Gandhiji could not do much for the eradication of Untouchability. It is a deep-rooted problem which has defied all solutions so far. The problem has persisted largely because of the illiteracy and ignorance of the people. Their ignorance makes the people conservative and superstitious. Hence they do not accept any social change. They want things to continue as they are. Every measure of social reform is strongly opposed and is considered to be an attack on their religion by the religious fanatics.

Therefore, if the evil of caste system is to be eradicated every possible effort should be made to educate the people and thus



create a strong public opinion against the evil. School text books should be carefully revised. Lessons should be included to teach the students that the caste system is manmade. It was a system for the division of labour devised by our wise forefathers. Originally, man was not born into any cast: his caste was determined by his learning or by the nature of work he did in life. Basically, all human beings are equal; they have the same kind of blood in their veins. The differences of upper and lower are wrong, and entirely the creation of vested interests. The similarities between the different castes should be stressed rather than the differences. In this way would be created awareness against the caste system and its hold upon society would be gradually loosened.

In short, the key to this problem lies in the creation of a strong public opinion against it. Teachers, professional Gurus, scholars, thinkers, and writers should all unite in the nations fight against this chronic and widespread social evil. A responsible press can do a lot in this direction.

The caste system persists even after 62 years of independence. Every effort should be made to change the psychology of the people, and strict action taken against offenders. India a nation of diverse culture not only that holds good but also a land of diverse problems. Caste is the most confused knot of all social problems. Religion is just a belief change anytime of the life, but caste is a constant which don't change even occupation and social status changes. Caste is like Iomega value simply a mere constant don't change in any situation. We can't change caste

but we can eradicate caste from our society we can't expect politician to talk about casteless society because they want people to be divided.

Every party in India is strongly backed by a caste. So they don't allow people to get united in casteless society because it difficult for minor caste party to remain in the politics. There dalit parties in India from north to south which project them self as voice of SC's and ST's. Since independence no changes as came to this section of people. Top leaders and politicians play caste politics to sustain in power and earn wealth. No equality in the society both economically and socially.

## **Chapter 4**

# **Caste and Class Based Indian Politics and Movements**

## **Class and Caste Movements in India**

During the recent years, caste mobilisation has become an important factor in shaping Indian politics. Ever since the issue of Mandal Commission reservations in government jobs for the OBCs came to the national agenda in 1989, it has left an impact on the evolution of national politics. For a Marxist and a Communist, it is not only necessary to assess this growing role of caste assertion in Indian political life but also to map out the manner in which the unity of the toilers' is strengthened in order to achieve the People's Democratic Revolution. Unless, as PS always used to teach us, we tackle with clarity this important phenomenon, we will not be able to overcome the potentially disruptive role that caste mobilisation can have on toilers' unity. It is for these reasons that this issue needs to be address with all seriousness.

At the outset, it is necessary to debunk a common fallacy that attempts to pit caste versus class. Vested interests often advise Communists that since they believe in class divisions in society,

caste ought not to engage their attention. Such a mechanical distinction between caste and class is not only a vulgar simplification but divorced from the present day Indian reality. The caste stratification of our society is something that has come down to us from centuries. Despite all the refinements and changes within castes and between castes, that has taken place over the years, the basic structure, in so far as the oppression of the dalits or the backward castes is concerned remains. It is within this social stratification that the class formation in India is taking place. Capitalism is still developing in India and the process of the development of society divided into modern capitalist classes, is taking place constantly within the existing caste stratification. The question therefore, is not one of class versus caste. It is the formation of classes under modern capitalism within the inherited caste structure. To a large extent, the most exploited classes in our society constitute the most socially oppressed castes. And, to that extent, the struggle against class exploitation and the struggle against social oppression complement each other. These sections as it were, are subject to dual oppression. It is this complementarity that not only needs to be recognised but on the basis of that recognition, it must follow that an important task before the Communist movement in our country today is the integration of the struggle against class exploitation with the struggle against social oppression. As we shall see later, it is only through such an integration that the firm unity of the toilers can be forged and strengthened in order to advance towards People's Democracy. Before we take up the task of trying to understand the nature and characteristics of caste mobilisation in the present day

political life, one needs to examine, albeit briefly, as to why caste divisions and social oppression continue to persist even after all the tall claims made by the ruling classes through the post-independence decades to overcome them.

There is a vast amount of literature on the evolution and sustenance of the caste system in India. The large number of such works is only matched by the divergence of its conclusions. I am not here going into the origins of the caste system or its tenacity. Some scholars have also linked it with a discussion of Marx's Asiatic Mode of production. Without any disrespect or devaluation of such work, which I consider is of immense intellectual and political value, it would suffice for our discussion to base ourselves on the fact (agreed upon by most) that the caste system, in Marxist terms, is the superstructure of an economic base which is pre-capitalist. In that sense, any attempt to overthrow this sinful heritage and obnoxious caste oppression will have to target the elimination of the vestiges of pre-capitalist economic formations. This, in our present case, is the elimination of the vestiges of feudalism and semi-feudalism. This does not mean, even for a moment, that such elimination, through a comprehensive agrarian revolution, however complex and difficult it may be, will automatically eliminate the caste system and the entire range of social consciousness associated with it. As Engels in a letter to Block says, that Marx and he had meant that the economic factor is decisive in the final analysis. Even after the change in the economic base the superstructure and associated social consciousness may persist and would require an intense ideological struggle to eliminate it. But

without the attempt to change the pre-capitalist agrarian order, mere appeals for a change of heart or behaviour cannot and will not eliminate this obnoxious social oppression. Our opportunity that was there was to affect a sweeping agrarian revolution along with the anti-colonial freedom struggle. But this was not to be due to the compromising character of the leadership.

The main reason for this persistence of social oppression based on caste stratification is the inadequacy of the ruling classes, during the freedom struggle, in addressing themselves to this issue. The overcoming of caste differentiation was sought through proper social behaviour between individuals and castes without growing into the social roots of this phenomenon. The sinful heritage of caste oppression was something that the national anti-colonial struggle could not repudiate because the leadership of the freedom struggle was not interested in going to the root of the problem and uprooting it. Even it had a correct understanding of the social roots of the problem, it did not have the courage to seize it by the roots. By refusing to sweep away the feudal and semi-feudal agrarian relations, which was the bedrock for the continuation and persistence of caste exploitation, the leadership of freedom struggle not only permitted but in later years perpetuated the caste exploitation. Thus, the struggle against caste oppression over the decades of freedom movement and post-independence India was divorced from the anti-colonial struggle earlier and from the struggle for an agrarian revolution later. With the advent of modernisation under the British rule, particularly the railways, many, including Karl Marx, had thought that the old order would crumble paving

the way for a class division of modern society. However, this did not happen as envisaged. This was so because it was not in the interest of the colonial rule to transform Indian society. Its interests lay in exploiting the Indian people and its economy on the basis of their backwardness. This required to keep the rural land relations intact, in class terms, modifying them only to advance the colonial revenue collections without disturbing the economic or social relations. The British also required that a powerful indigenous Indian capitalist class does not arise. The result was an alliance with the feudal landlords for its political survival and the super imposition of minimum modern capitalist relations on the existing feudal land relations which sustained the caste system.

Thus, we find under the British rule, a contradictory process was put in motion. The effect of modern relations as Marx had foreseen — railways, communications, growing market, few industries, and trade — accentuated the tendency towards destroying the old structure and with it the caste system and replacing it with modern day class divisions. On the other hand, the vital interests of the colonial power lay in seeking political and economic support from the landlords and feudal interests, thus maintaining the old land relations and thereby supporting the caste structure and institutions. Thus, the process of change of the old society, under the British rule, was slow and painful and never destined to be completed.

Simultaneously within the freedom movement itself, there were two main trends that contributed to the persistence of the caste

institutions. One was the revivalist ideology which dominated a number of leaders of the freedom movement. Coming from upper caste Hindu background, these leaders in the struggle against the British drew sustenance from India's so called past and in the process they defended the social institutions of this past. Tilak was, in fact, a classic example of such a tendency. Rajni Palme Dutt in *India Today* summed up this line of thinking most appropriately by the following:

“So from the existing foul welter and decaying and corrupt metaphysics, from the broken relics of the shattered village system, from the dead remains of court splendours of a vanished civilisation, they sought to fabricate and build up and reconstitute a golden dream of Hindu culture — a ‘purified’ Hindu culture — which they could hold up as an ideal and a guiding light. Against the overwhelming flood of British bourgeois culture and ideology, which they saw completely conquering the Indian bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, they sought to hold forward a feeble shield of a reconstructed Hindu ideology which had no longer any natural basis for its existence in actual life conditions. All social and scientific development was condemned by the more extreme devotees of this gospel as the conquerors’ culture: every form of antiquated tradition, even abuse, privilege and obscurantism, was treated with respect and veneration.

Similar is the attitude of present day communal forces. Precisely because their ideological roots are based on revivalism and obscurantism, they are opposed to a thorough agrarian revolution. Even at the level of the superstructure despite



mouthed radical slogans, they only strengthen the caste hierarchies of the old Hindu order.

The other tendency which prevented the liquidation of the old order along with the freedom struggle was the vacillation of the Congress towards landlords and feudal interests. At a time when huge mass peasant revolts had started growing against landlords, the Congress in the 1922 Bardoli resolution calling off the national campaign against the British stated: "The Working Committee advises Congress workers and organisations to inform the ryots that withholding of rent payments to zamindar is contrary to the Congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country. The Working Committee assures the zamindars that the Congress movement is in no way interested to attack their legal rights ....." Thus, the Congress's efforts to achieve independence were divorced from the agrarian revolution. In fact, as we shall see later, instead of carrying on a sweeping overthrow of the old feudal order, the Congress compromised with the landlords sharing power with them in post-independent India.

These two tendencies put together prevented any meaningful attack against the social oppression of the caste system associated with the feudal and semi-feudal order existing in the country. It was only the Communist Party of India which linked the struggle against British imperialism with a comprehensive agrarian revolution. Right from the Platform of Action in 1930 to the memorandum submitted to the National Integration Council by Comrade PS on behalf of the CPI(M) in 1968, the Communist movement constantly underlined that caste exploitation and

social emancipation could be possible only through sweeping changes in agrarian relations. However, in the absence of a powerful agrarian movement, this task has remained unfulfilled till date. As a result, given the compromising attitude of the bourgeois leadership, the atrocities and caste oppression continue to persist.

Another current also needs to be properly analysed in order to understand the persistence of the caste stratification till date, ie, the Social Reform Movement. There have been huge anti-caste movements that have taken place in the country and have wielded significant political influence at their time. Amongst the giants that stand out of such movements was Jyotiba Phule. Jyotiba was a great secular democrat whose passion for the untouchable and sense of justice was unheard of. He, personally, had absolutely no caste bias and the movement demanding equal treatment was named as the satyashodhak — a movement against untruth, injustice and hypocrisy of the Hindu social order dominated by the Brahmins.

Ideologically Jyotiba's movement was an uncompromising attack on the ancient and feudal superstructure. However, this uncompromising attack did not go beyond to attack the basic agrarian relations based on feudal land relations which was the basis on which this superstructure existed. While this movement contributed immensely to increase consciousness against caste exploitation, it could reach the levels to the elimination of that precisely because it could not mobilise the peasantry for an agrarian revolution.

Similar has been the experience of Ambedkar. This most outstanding and tireless fighter, who on behalf of the dalits exposed the upper caste hypocrisies, lambasted the Congress and its policies had to finally asked his followers to embrace Buddhism to escape the injustices of Hindu society. But the grim social reality based on unequal land relations did not change because of conversion to Buddhism.

Unfortunately, smashing the present socio-economic system as the decisive step for elimination of caste exploitation, was replaced by formal declarations of equality, reservation of seats, jobs etc. It was once again shown that despite a leader of Ambedkar's structure, despite the strength of the movement, the objective could not be achieved because it failed to target the basic source of this exploitation, ie, feudal and semi-feudal land relations.

Similar also has been the experience of the Dravidian movement led by Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker. Periyar did succeed in creating a great feeling against caste oppression and his voice boomed large against untouchability. But yet again, viewing this merely at the level of superstructure without attacking the economic base that nurtured such monstrous iniquitous caste stratification, the movement could not reach its logical culmination.

Thus, we find that the social reform movement, despite the glorious uncompromising role of its leaders could not achieve the

stated objective as it either ignored or bypassed the tasks of the agrarian revolution.

Thus, we find at the time of independence, all these currents put together had created a situation where the tasks of the democratic revolution — chiefly the agrarian revolution — remained unfulfilled under the bourgeois leadership of the freedom struggle that not only vacillated but compromised with landlordism.

This process gets manifested in a concrete expression in post-independent India. The Indian bourgeoisie, in its eagerness to capture state power, on the one hand compromised with imperialism and on the other, compromised with landlordism and semi-feudal forces. It shared power with the later in the ruling class alliance. Thus instead of sweeping away the feudal and semi-feudal land relations along with the anti-colonial-anti-imperialist struggle, the ruling classes perpetuated these relations, seeking only to modify them for their interests by attempting to superimpose capitalism. Thus, instead of a sweeping overthrow of the old order from below what happened over these years of independence was the limited superimposition of capitalist relations in agriculture, that too in limited pockets without overthrowing the social relations. This only perpetuated the social consciousness associated with the semi-feudal relations — caste and communalism.

Further, the system of parliamentary democracy that was adopted was based on an electoral system which tended to reinforce the

caste consciousness. Instead of guaranteeing equality, irrespective of caste, the electoral system, itself, nurtured the perpetuation of caste consciousness in terms of choice of candidates and the appeal to the electorate. The ruling classes have consistently refused to accept the CPI(M)'s suggestion to introduce proportional representation. Apart from its other advantages, as people would have to vote for parties and not individuals, this would have minimised the appeals based on caste, religion, community etc.

While both these factors tended to reinforce the perpetuation of caste oppression, the Congress leadership continued to mouth concern over caste oppression and continued to appeal to people to change their way of life and outlook rather than attack the economic basis on which this oppression thrived. The inability to proceed with even the limited land reform legislations because of the alliance with the landlords prevented in the past and prevents today the Indian bourgeoisie to complete the tasks of the democratic revolution.

This is reinforced by the attitude of the Congress leaders, even those coming from the dalits. A case in point is the experiences and opinions of Shri Jagjivan Ram in his book *Caste Challenge in India*. Unlike many other dalit leaders who stood aloof from the national movement, Shri Jagjivan Ram has a proud distinction of active participation in the freedom struggle, including imprisonment. With justified passion, he recounts the plight of the dalits and the oppressed castes. Intellectually, he accepts the fact that the struggle against caste oppression can only be

successful as an integral part of the struggle of the exploited classes of India. Despite emphasising this consistently in his book, the final solution he offers is characteristic of a bourgeois leader. He abhors class struggle for the emancipation of the poor and urges the people to adopt the Gandhian way, ie, the elimination of such oppression with the exercise of the force of morality. Thus, once again, we find that while understanding the problem correctly, while describing the situation graphically, the modern day leaders of post-independent India also fought shy of mobilising the people for a sweeping agrarian revolution as the basic solution of the problem.

The net result has been not the building up of a movement for the eradication of social oppression that the caste system represents but for palliatives offered to redress to some degree the suffering of these sections through the extension of the British concept of concessions such as reservations in educational institutions and jobs. These are projected as an end in itself. This, despite the plethora of statistical information that this has not substantially altered the conditions of a vast majority of the oppressed. In the absence of any meaningful change in agrarian relations, such concessions must be supported. But no illusions must be entertained that this is the only solution.

In the very nature of things these palliatives will neither solve the problem of poverty and unemployment, nor change the condition of untouchables and other downtrodden castes. They will certainly offer some relief, to individuals from these

communities, enhance their confidence in their advance, but not change their status. For the ruling classes these concessions play an important role. In the first place in the general competition for jobs etc, they pit one section of toilers against another. Secondly they create an impression among some sections that government is their real friend and they should confine the struggle within the framework of the bourgeois system. Thus a basis of challenge to the present socio-economic system from the most downtrodden sections is prevented.

Another phenomenon will also have to be noted which was taking place simultaneously. A parallel development that was taking place during the days of the freedom struggle and particularly after the independence was the process of emergence of a modern state in India. The vast multinational character of our country ensured that different sections — caste, religions, ethnic, regional — began rightfully demanding equality of status and opportunity in the new independent polity. But, however, as the economic crisis deepened in the post-independent decades, far from the expectations of these different sections being met the disparities started growing. This led and continues to lead today for the scramble amongst these different sections for a share of the cake. As the size of the cake shrinks this scramble takes the form of conflict between various groups. Hence, the demand for reservations from new sections and the opposition to reservations from other sections becomes a common practice.

It is, in this background of deepening crisis in our country, that one must understand the nature of the present caste assertion.

There are two aspects to this. On the one hand, as a result of whatever limited development that has taken place since independence and in the background of the deepening crisis, there is a growing consciousness amongst the oppressed castes to rebel against their conditions of social oppression. This is a positive aspect. Without such a growing consciousness the struggle against oppression and exploitation cannot be carried out decisively. This is a consciousness that needs to be nurtured and strengthened by the Communists with the effort to integrate this consciousness with the struggles against the present socio-economic system. It is only through such an integration of the struggle against social oppression and the struggle against modern day class exploitation can the struggle for an agrarian revolution be strengthened and carried forward to its logical culmination.

There is, however, another aspect to the present day caste assertion. This is the attempt to try and confine this growing consciousness within the parameters of the concerned caste. This is resorted to by the leadership of the present day movements whose outlook is no different from the one's we discussed above. While appealing only to the caste consciousness and ignoring, if not evading, the basic issue of the struggle against the existing agrarian order, these leaders once again are appealing for a change in the superstructure without affecting the base. In doing so, they treat this growing consciousness amongst the dalits and the backward caste as separate compartments, as vote banks, for their political fortunes rather than addressing themselves for a genuine solution of the problem.



The appeal of such caste leaders to their following is not to strengthen the common struggle to change the present socio-economic system. The appeal is to elect their brethren to power. Thus spreading the illusion that coming to power within the same system that protects the existing socio-economic order is a solution to their problems. This may serve the lust for power of the leaders but the living conditions of the mass remain as backward as ever. This has been the experience of the governments that have come to power in Bihar and UP. Neither of them even initiated the implementation of existing land reform legislations that the West Bengal Left Front government has done. By exploiting the growing consciousness amongst the socially oppressed, the leadership is thus, perpetuating the very edifice of exploitation of the existing socio-economic system. Instead of sweeping agrarian changes they seek to preserve the existing order that perpetuates the caste system and its oppression.

The net result of this is that this dual nature of the present caste assertion presents itself in a manner as though, there is a duality of social consciousness amongst the oppressed. The Communist movement itself has experienced instances of how the oppressed sections are willing to brave the worst police oppression in their economic struggles under the red flag, but when it comes to electoral preferences and voting, they appear to be guided by their social kinship and caste affinity. It is this apparent duality of social consciousness that the vested interests of the caste leadership seek to preserve. They do so for electoral benefit. But in the process, they seek to divorce the struggle, against social

oppression from the struggle against modern day class exploitation. Thus, instead of strengthening the unity of the toilers against the present socio-economic system, they tend to separate the two struggles thereby weakening this unity.

It is the task of the Communists today in the present situation to integrate these struggles against social oppression with class exploitation in one, overall wider class struggle to change the existing socio-economic system and unleash the agrarian revolution. This is a challenge of our times. The red flag should be as active in mobilising the people in the struggles against the new economic policies, against communalism, as in mobilising the oppressed in the struggles against social oppression.

It is precisely because the Communists seek and strive for such integration that various caste leaders pour venomous attacks against us. For when such integration takes place, there is no room for sordid political bargaining and manoeuvring that is done by the leaders in the name of the exploited castes (Eg: UP today). Hence, Shri Kanshi Ram's preposterous attacks against the Communists particularly the CPI(M).

Therefore, while supporting reservations for the dalits and the backward castes, the Communist movement unhesitatingly always emphasises that this is not the final solution. Enough statistics can be adduced to show that despite reservations, the plight of these sections has not substantially improved.

While all caste leaders mouth the necessity of radical economic reforms to improve the lot of the oppressed, it is by now clear

that unless the struggle for a sweeping agrarian revolution takes place, no meaningful emancipation of these sections who continue to pay for the sins of the past, cannot be achieved.

Thus, paying homage to Comrade PS today means to carry forward the struggle that he initiated and undertook in his time in modern day conditions. He did so through practice in the Telengana armed struggle when the dalit agricultural labour fought alongside the caste peasant. The source of inspiration that this continues to be today must motivate all of us to unleash a powerful agrarian movement for the sweeping away of the semi-feudal land relations. This is the only manner in which social oppression and economic exploitation can be overcome leading to the liberation of the millions of the oppressed and exploited brothers and sisters of ours.

During the first Round Table Conference, when Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar favoured the move of the British Government to provide separate electorate for the oppressed classes, Gandhi strongly opposed it on the plea that the move would give power to the oppressed classes. He went for an indefinite hunger strike from September 20, 1932 against the decision of the then British Prime Minister J.Ramsay MacDonald granting communal award to the depressed classes in the constitution for governance of British India. In view of the mass upsurge generated in the country to save the life of Gandhi, Ambedkar was compelled to soften his stand. A compromise between the leaders of caste Hindu and the depressed classes was reached on September 24, 1932, popularly known as Poona Pact.

The resolution announced in a public meeting on September 25 in Bombay confirmed -" henceforth, amongst Hindus no one shall be regarded as an untouchable by reason of his birth and they will have the same rights in all the social institutions as the other Hindus have". This landmark resolution in the history of the Dalit movement in India subsequently formed the basis for giving due share to Dalits in the political empowerment of Indian people in a democratic Indian polity. The following is the text of the agreement arrived at between leaders acting on behalf of the Depressed Classes and of the rest of the community, regarding the representation of the Depressed Classes in the legislatures and certain other matters affecting their welfare.

- There shall be seats reserved for the Depressed Classes out of general electorate seats in the provincial legislatures as follows: - Madras 30; Bombay with Sind 25; Punjab 8; Bihar and Orissa 18; Central Provinces 20; Assam 7; Bengal 30; United Provinces 20. Total 148. These figures are based on the Prime Minister's decision.
- Election to these seats shall be by joint electorates subject, however, to the following procedure All members of the Depressed Classes registered in the general electoral roll of a constituency will form an electoral college which will elect a panel of four candidates belonging to the Depressed Classes for each of such reserved seats by the method of the single vote and four persons getting the highest number of votes in

such primary elections shall be the candidates for election by the general electorate.

- The representation of the Depressed Classes in the Central Legislature shall likewise be on the principle of joint electorates and reserved seats by the method of primary election in the manner provided for in clause above for their representation in the provincial legislatures.

While I can understand the desire of Dalits to home into that skirmish and claim that to be the be all and end all of all, skirmishes like this have to be grounded in the greater framework. The Maratha Empire brought to life by Shivaji attained its greatest strength by 1760. And I should point out that Shivaji was not a Brahmin. While they claimed Kshyatriya status later on, there are some arguments that he was originally a Dalit, a Shudra to be precise. Finally, Shivaji's army was largely composed of people like him, so it was a Dalit Army anyway which got promoted, so to say. Then comes the first Anglo Maratha War 1777-1783 where first the Maratha's won and then the British won. In both cases, native soldiers were far too frequently Dalits. Anyway, more land was captured by the Brits and the power of the Maratha's was further reduced. Peshwa Baji Rao II and his father basically got up to no good. In 1802, BajiRao went and sucked up to the British after being defeated by Holkars in the Battle of Pooná. This pissed off the other Maratha warlords and they got into a bit of a fight with the British which ended with more loss of territory for the Marathas. Then comes the crucial 3rd War which our Dalit friends might now

appreciate. This relates to the 3rd Anglo Maratha War 1817-1818 or the Pindari War. The Pindari's were highly mobile cavalry units which were not on the payroll of any ruler but associated with rulers in return for protection and permission to plunder. Guess what?

These Pindari's were low caste, Ladul and also had quite a lot of Muslims. Anyway, all this plundering was not good for the British and a really very big army of 120,000 men and 300 artillery pieces was put into gear by Lord Hastings to exterminate these Pindari's. The attacks happened from the east in Bengal, from the South in the Deccan and from the west from Gujarat and Bombay. Once the British invaded Maratha territory to go after the Pindari's, there were skirmishes between the Peshwa's forces and the British forces such as the sack of the British Residency in Pune, and then the British routed another Peshwa force at Khirki. Then the main battle was fought in the Battle of Khadki on November 5, 1817 where the Peshwa Baji Rao was routed pretty much comprehensively and then the British took over the Peshwa's seat at Shaniwarwada by November 17, 1817. The Peshwa, by this time, was running ragged. There was another battle between the Nagpur forces and the British at Sitabalsi on November 27 1817. The next battle to be fought was the Battle of Mahidpur on 20th December where the Holkar's fought and lost to the British, after being betrayed by one of the Pindari.

A good description of the battle can be found here. This is a book by WC Taylor, a Popular History of British India published in 1847. Sounds like a pretty good bash. Taylor says that the

Peshwa's forces numbered about 25,000 although it should be noted that counting was pretty vague at that time. Still, it wasn't 50,000.

But here's the crucial thing, the Peshwa's forces then retreated not because they were defeated by Captain Francis Staunton's forces, but because they got to hear that British reinforcements were coming over. The British forces lost 200 soldiers out of 500, and 6 out of 7 British officers. Good defensive battle without food or water at this village.

The soldiers who did most of the dying were Mahars. And again ironically, they got their start in being soldiers by no other than Shivaji to become scouts and fortress guards. They were highly mobile light infantry, which is the reason why they were in the 2nd Battalion, 1st regiment of 'Bombay Native Light Infantry' as part of the Maratha Light Infantry. The Peshwa's soldiers were also by and large lower caste soldiers including Mahars, in any case, not Brahmins.

So the fighting basically was between lower castes, only the people who were ordering them around were the British and the Peshwas. This Mahar Regiment still exists and has provided two of the most brilliant Indian Army Chiefs: Gen K V Krishna Rao and Gen K Sunderji. Also, there is no caste element to the regiment from 1963 onwards and it is now a fully mixed regiment.

There was another fight between the fleeing Peshwa's forces and the British at Ashti on February 20th 1818 and he remained

under pressure till he surrendered to Sir John Malcolm on June 3, 1818 and was given the pension of an annual payment of 8 lakhs rupees. The Battle of Koregaon was celebrated by rising of an Obelix which commemorated this. So all in all, I am afraid what my research threw up was in sharp variance with the mythology is being provided. It was frankly a small battle/skirmish in a much bigger war, the Peshwa's forces were not defeated in this skirmish, the British Army did not fight this battle expecting the worst because they had been winning every battle in this war, this battle of Koregaon was not really that important as fighting kept on happening for months after this battle and I am afraid there is absolutely no evidence that any kind of caste based ideology was involved in the fight. So all in all, good myth but a rather more calm reading of the historical record tells differently.

I can also see why the Dalit hotheads want to use this battle to burnish their credentials. After all, all revolutions need their battles. Google for "Battle of Koregaon" to see how this myth is being built up, but I am afraid the reading is slightly different. If they do want to celebrate the success of lower caste soldiers, they should celebrate Shivaji, the Indian Soldier, the bravery that these soldiers showed to whoever paid them. But to bring this casteism into the Indian Army? Not really cricket, old chaps. But I am very happy to be corrected if I have not referred to any other source or documentation.



## **Self-Respect Movement**

The Self-Respect Movement was founded in 1925 by Periyar E. V. Ramasamy in Tamil Nadu, India. The movement has the aim of achieving a society where backward castes have equal human rights, and encouraging backward castes to have self-respect in the context of a caste based society that considered them to be a lower end of the hierarchy.

The movement was extremely influential not just in Tamil Nadu, but also overseas in countries with large Tamil populations, such as Malaysia and Singapore. Among Singapore Indians, groups like the Tamil Reform Association, and leaders like Thamizhavel G. Sarangapani were prominent in promoting the principals of the Self-Respect Movement among the local Tamil population through schools and publications. A number of political parties in Tamil Nadu, such as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam owe their origins to the Self-respect movement, the latter a 1972 breakaway from the DMK. Both parties are populist with a generally social democratic orientation.

## **The Tenets of Self-Respect**

Periyar was convinced that if man developed self-respect, he would automatically develop individuality and would refuse to be led by the nose by schemers. One of his most known quotes on Self-Respect was, “we are fit to think of ‘self-respect’ only when the notion of ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ caste is banished from our

land". Periyar did not expect personal or material gain out of this movement. He used to recall in a very casual manner that as a human being, he also was obligated to this duty, as it was the right and freedom to choose this work. Thus, Periyar opted to engage himself in starting and promoting the movement. Periyar declared that the Self-Respect Movement alone could be the genuine freedom movement, and political freedom would not be fruitful without individual self-respect. He remarked that the so called 'Indian freedom fighters' were showing disrespect of self-respect, and this was really an irrational philosophy. Periyar observed that political freedom as conceived by nationalists not excluding even Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru did not cover individual self-respect.

To him neither revival of the original spirit of Hindu religion and ancient traditions which formed part of Gandhi's conception of freedom, nor complete liberation from the British rule which was considered by Nehru to be the meaning of freedom or both of them together could ensure individual self-respect or remove the ills from Indian societies. In his opinion the task of fulfilling the need for self-respect would have to be faced whatever be the extent of political freedom gained. Pointing out that even the British monarch in a sovereign independent nation had no freedom to marry a person of his choice and had to abdicate his kingdom, Periyar raised a question whether Gandhi's vision of freedom or Nehru's concept of independence contained even an iota of individual self-respect. Periyar believed that self-respect was as valuable as life itself and its protection is a birth right and not swaraj. He described the movement as Arivu Vidutalai

Iyakkam, that is, a movement to liberate the intellect. The terms *tan-maanam* or *suya mariyadai* meaning 'self-respect' are traceable in ancient Tamil literature considered a virtue of high valor in Tamil society.

Periyar once claimed that to describe the ideology of his movement, no dictionary in the entire world, implying that no other language, could provide a word better than or equal to *suya mariyadai*. Started as a movement to promote rational behaviour, the Self-Respect Movement acquired much wider connotation within a short period of time. Periyar speaking with M.K. Reddy at the First Self-Respect Conference held in 1929, explained the significance of self-respect and its principles. The main tenets of the Self-Respect Movement in society were to be: no kind of inequality among people; no difference as rich and poor in the economic life; men and women to be treated as equals in every respect without differences; attachments to caste, religion, varna, and country to be eradicated from society with a prevalent friendship and unity around the world; and every human being seeing to act according to reason, understanding, desire, and perspective, and shall not be subject to slavery of any kind or manner. Equality with stress on economic and social equality formed the central theme of the Self-Respect Movement was due to Periyar's determination to fight the inequalities ingrained in the caste system and religious practices. Working on the theme of liberating the society from the baneful social practices perpetrated in the name of dharma and karma, Periyar developed the idea of establishing this movement as the instrument for achieving his objective.

## **Anti-Brahmanism**

Tamil Brahmins were frequently held responsible by followers of Periyar for direct or indirect oppression of lower-caste people on the canard of “Brahmin oppression” and resulted in attacks on Brahmins and which among other reasons started a wave of mass-migration of the Brahmin population. Periyar in regards to a DK member’s attempt to assassinate Rajagopalachari, “expressed his abhorrence of violence as a means of settling political differences”. Eventually, the anti-Brahmanism subsided with the replacement of the DMK party by the AIADMK.

## **Self-Respect Marriages**

One of the major sociological changes introduced through the self respect movement was the self-respect marriage system, where by marriages were conducted without being officiated by a Brahmin priest. Periyar had regarded the then conventional marriages were mere financial arrangements and often caused great debt through dowry. Self-Respect marriages encouraged inter-caste marriages and arranged marriages to be replaced by love marriages. It was argued by the proponents of self-respect marriage that the then conventional marriages were officiated by Brahmins, who has to be paid for and also the marriage ceremony was in Sanskrit which most people did not understand, and hence were ritual and practices based on blind adherence.

## **Mandal Commission**

The Mandal Commission was established in India in 1979 by the Janata Party government under Prime Minister Morarji Desai with a mandate to “identify the socially or educationally backward.”

It was headed by Indian parliamentarian Bindheshwari Prasad Mandal to consider the question of seat reservations and quotas for people to redress caste discrimination, and used eleven social, economic, and educational indicators to determine backwardness. In 1980, the commission’s report affirmed the affirmative action practice under Indian law whereby members of lower castes were given exclusive access to a certain portion of government jobs and slots in public universities, and recommended changes to these quotas, increasing them by 27 per cent to 49.5 per cent.

## **Setting Up Of Mandal Commission**

The plan to set up another commission was taken by Mr. Clooney and the Morarji Desai government in 1978 as per the mandate of the Constitution of India under article 340 for the purpose of Articles like 15 and 16.

The decision was made official by the president on 1 January 1979. The commission is popularly known as the Mandal Commission its chairman being B.P. Mandal..

## **Criteria to identify OBC**

The Mandal Commission adopted various methods and techniques to collect the necessary data and evidence. The commission adopted 11 criteria which could be grouped under three major headings: social, educational and economic in order to identify OBCs.

### **Social**

- Castes/classes considered as socially backward by others.
- Castes/classes which mainly depend on manual labour for their livelihood.
- Castes/classes where at least 25 per cent females and 10 per cent males above the state average get married at an age below 17 years in rural areas and at least 10 per cent females and 5 per cent males do so in urban areas.
- Castes/classes where participation of females in work is at least 25 per cent above the state average.

### **Educational**

- Castes/classes where the number of children in the age group of 5–15 years who never attended school is at least 25 per cent above the state average.

- Castes/classes where the rate of student drop-out in the age group of 5–15 years is at least 25 per cent above the state average.

## **Economic**

- Castes/classes where the average value of family assets is at least 25 per cent below the state average.
- Castes/classes where the number of families living in kuccha houses is at least 25 per cent above the state average.
- Castes/classes where the source of drinking water is beyond half a kilometer for more than 50 per cent of the households.
- Castes/classes where the number of households having taken consumption loans is at least 25 per cent above the state average. Also known as “Creamy layer,” this criteria of separation is ignored by the government which is known as the most controversial issue of reservation.

## **Weighting Indicators**

Three groups are not of equal importance for the purpose, separate weightage was given to indicators in each group. All the Social indicators were given a weightage of 3 points each, educational indicators were given a weightage of 2 points each and economic indicators were given a weightage of 1 point each.

Economic, in addition to Social and Educational Indicators, were considered important as they directly flowed from social and educational backwardness. This also helped to highlight the fact that socially and educationally backward classes are economically backward also.

It will be seen from the values given to each indicator, the total score adds up to 22. All these 11 indicators were applied to all the castes covered by the survey for a particular state. As a result of this application, all castes which had a score of 50 per cent were listed as socially and educationally backward and the rest were treated as 'advanced'.

## **Observations and Findings**

The commission estimated that 54 per cent of the total population, belonging to 3,743 different castes and communities were 'backward'. Figures of caste-wise population are not available beyond. So the commission used 1931 census data to calculate the number of OBCs.

The population of Hindu OBCs was derived by subtracting from the total population of Hindus, the population of SC and ST and that of forward Hindu castes and communities, and it worked out to be 52 per cent. Assuming that roughly the proportion of OBCs amongst non-Hindus was of the same order as amongst the Hindus, population of non-Hindu OBCs was also considered as 52 per cent.



- Assuming that a child from an advanced class family and that of a backward class family had the same intelligence at the time of their birth, it is obvious that owing to vast differences in social, cultural and environmental factors, the former will beat the latter by lengths in any competitive field. Even if a backward class child's intelligence quotient was much higher as compared to the child of advanced class, chances are that the former will lag far behind the latter in any competition where selection is made on the basis of 'merit'.
- In fact, what we call 'merit' in an elitist society is an amalgam of native endowments and environmental privileges. A child from an advanced class family and that of a backward class family are not 'equals' in any fair sense of the term and it will be unfair to judge them by the same yard-stick. The conscience of a civilized society and the dictates of social justice demand that 'merit' and 'equality' are not turned into a fetish and the element of privilege is duly recognised and discounted for when 'unequal' are made to run the same race.
- To place the amalgams of open caste conflicts in proper historical context, the study done by Tata institute of Social Sciences Bombay observes. "The British rulers produced many structural disturbances in the Hindu caste structure, and these were contradictory in nature and impact .... Thus, the various impacts of the British rule on the Hindu caste system, *viz.*, near

monopolisation of jobs, education and professions by the literati castes, the Western concepts of equality and justice undermining the Hindu hierarchical dispensation, the phenomenon of Sanskritization, genteel reform movement from above and militant reform movements from below, emergence of the caste associations with a new role set the stage for the caste conflicts in modern India. Two more ingredients which were very weak in the British period, *viz.*, politicisation of the masses and universal adult franchise, became powerful moving forces after the Independence.

## **Recommendations**

The report of the commission was submitted in December 1980. Following are the recommendations as stated in the report. It may appear the upliftment of Other Backward Classes is part of the larger national problem of the removal of mass poverty. This is only partially correct. The deprivation of OBCs is a very special case of the larger national issue: here the basic question is that of social and educational backwardness and poverty is only a direct consequence of these two crippling caste-based handicaps. As these handicaps are embedded in our social structure, their removal will require far – reaching structural changes. No less important will be changes in the perception of the problems of OBCs by the ruling classes of the country.

## **Reservations**

One such change in the attitude of the ruling elite pertains to the provisions of reservation in Government services and educational institutions for the candidates of Other Backward Classes. It is generally argued that looking to the large population of OBCs, recruitment of a few thousand OBCs every year against reserved vacancies is not going to produce any perceptible impact on their general condition. On the other hand, the induction of a large proportion of employees against reserved vacancies will considerably impair the quality and efficiency of the Government services. It is also stated that the benefits of such reservations will be skimmed off by those parts of OBCs which are already well off and the really backward parts will be left high and dry. Another argument advanced against this approach is that the policy of large scale reservations will cause great hurt to those meritorious candidates whose entry into services will be barred as a result thereof.

All the above arguments are based on fairly sound reasoning. But these are also the arguments advanced by the ruling elite which are keen on preserving its privileges. Therefore, like all such reasoning, it is based on a partisan approach. By the same token, while illuminating some immediate areas of concern it tends to ignore much larger issues of national importance. It is not at all our contention that by offering a few thousand jobs to OBC candidates we shall be able to make 52 per cent of the Indian population as forward. But we must recognise that an essential part of the battle against social backwardness is to be fought in

the minds of the backward people. In India Government service has always been looked upon as a symbol of prestige and power.

By increasing the representation of OBCs in Government services, we give them an immediate feeling of participation in the governance of this country. When a backward class candidate becomes a Collector or a Superintendent of Police, the material benefits accruing from his position are limited to the members of his family only. But the psychological spin off of this phenomenon is tremendous; the entire community of that backward class candidate feels socially elevated. Even when no tangible benefits flow to the community at large, the feeling that now it has its "own man" in the "corridors of power" acts as a morale booster. In a democratic set-up every individual and community has a legitimate right and aspiration to participate in ruling this country. Any situation which results in a near-denial of this right to nearly 52 per cent of the country's population needs to be urgently rectified. Apprehensions regarding drop in the quality of Government services owing to large-scale induction of S.C./S.T. and O.B.C. candidates against reserved posts may be justified only up to a point. But is it possible to maintain that all candidates selected on merit turn out to be honest, efficient, hard-working and dedicated? At present, top echelons of all the Government services are manned predominantly by open competition candidates and if the performance of our bureaucracy is any indication, it has not exactly covered itself with glory. Of course, this does not imply that candidates selected against reserved posts will do better. Chances are that owing to their social and cultural handicaps they may be

generally a shade less competent. But, on the other hand, they will have great advantage of possessing first hand knowledge of the sufferings and problems of the backward parts of society. This is not a small asset for field workers and policy makers even at highest level. It is no doubt true that the major benefits of reservation and other welfare measures for Other Backward Classes will be cornered by the more advanced parts of the backward communities. But is not this a universal phenomenon? All reformists remedies have to contend with slow recovery along the hierarchical gradient; there are no quantum jumps in social reform.

Moreover, human nature being what it is, a “new class” ultimately does emerge even in classless societies. The chief merit on reservation is not that it will introduce egalitarian amongst OBCs when the rest of the Indian society is seized by all sorts of inequalities. But reservation will certainly erode the hold of higher castes on the services and enable OBCs in general to have a sense of participation in running the affairs of the country. It is certainly true that reservation for OBCs will cause a lot of heart burning to others. But should the mere fact of this heart burning be allowed to operate as a moral veto against social reform.... When the higher castes constituting less than 20 per cent of the country’s population subjected the rest to all manner of social injustice, it must have caused a lot of heart burning to the lower castes. But now that the lower castes are asking for a modest share of the national cake of power and prestige, a chorus of alarm is being raised on the plea that this will cause heart burning to the ruling elite.

Of all the specious arguments advanced against reservations for backward classes, there is none which beats this one about 'heart-burning' in sheer sophistry. In fact the Hindu society has always operated a very rigorous scheme of reservations, which was internalised through caste system. Eklavya lost his thumb and Shambhk his neck for their breach of caste rules of reservations. The present furore against reservations for OBCs is not aimed at the principle itself, but against the new class of beneficiaries, as they are now clamouring for a share of the opportunities which were all along monopolised by the higher castes.

## **Chapter 5**

# **Reservation Based Politics**

## **Quantum and Scheme of Reservations**

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute 22.5 per cent of the country's population. Accordingly, a pro-rata reservation of 22.5 per cent has been made for them in all services and public sector undertakings under the Central Government. In the States also, reservation for SCs and STs is directly proportional to their population in each State. The population of OBCs, both Hindu and non-Hindu, is around 52 per cent of the total population of India. Accordingly 52 per cent of all post under the Central Government should be reserved for them, but this provision may go against the law laid down in a number of Supreme Court judgements wherein it has been held that the total quantum of reservations under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution should be below 50 per cent. In view of this the proposed reservation for OBCs would have to be pegged at a figure which, when added to 22.5 per cent of SCs and STs, remain below 50 per cent.

In view of this legal constrain, the commission is obliged to recommend a reservation of 27 per cent only, even though their population is almost twice this figure. States which have already

introduced reservation for OBCs exceeding 27 per cent, will remain unaffected by this recommendation. With the above general recommendation regarding the quantum of reservation, the Commission proposes the following over-all scheme of reservation for OBCs:

- Candidates belonging to OBCs recruited on the basis of merit in an open competition should not be adjusted against their reservation quota of 27 per cent.
- The reservation should also be made available to promotion quota at all levels. nitika goyal (3) Reserved quota remaining unfilled should be carried forward for a period of three years and deserved thereafter.
- Relaxation in the upper age limit for direct recruitment should be extended in the same manner as done in case of SCs and STs.
- A roster system for each category of posts should be adopted by the concerned authorities in the same manner as presently done in respect of SC and ST candidates.

The scheme of reservations in its to should be made applicable to all recruitment to public sector undertakings both under the Central and State Governments, as also to nationalised banks. All private sector undertakings which have received financial assistance from the Government in one form or the other should also be obliged to recruit personnel on the aforesaid basis. All universities and affiliated colleges should also be covered by the scheme of reservation. To give proper effect to these



recommendations, it is imperative that adequate statutory provisions are made by the Government to amend the existing enactments, rules, procedure, etc. to the extent they are not in consonance with the same.

## **Educational Concessions**

Our educational system is elitist in character, results in a high degree of wastage and is least suited to the requirements of an over-populated and developing country. It is a legacy of the British rule which was severely criticised during the independence struggle, and yet, it has not undergone any structural changes. Though it is least suited to the needs of backward classes, yet, they are forced to run the rat-race with others as no options are available to them. As 'educational reform' was not within the terms of reference of the Commission, we are also forced to tread the beaten track and suggest only the palliative measure within existing framework.

Various State Governments are giving a number of educational concessions to other backward class students like exemption of tuition fees, free supply of books and clothes, mid-day meals, special hostel facilities, stipends, etc. These concessions are all right as far as they go. But they do not go far enough. What is required is, perhaps, not so much the provision of additional funds as the framing of integrated schemes for creating the proper environment and incentives for serious and purposeful studies. It is well known that most backward class children are irregular and indifferent students and their drop-out rate is very

high. There are two main reasons for this. First, these children are brought up in a climate of extreme social and cultural deprivation and consequently, a proper motivation for schooling is generally lacking. Secondly, most of these children come from very poor homes and their parents are forced to press them into doing small chores from a very young age. Upgrading the cultural environment is a very slow process. Transferring these children to an artificially upgraded environment is beyond the present resources of the country. In view of this it is recommended that this problem may be tackled on a limited and selective basis on two fronts. First, an intensive and time bound programme for adult education should be launched in selected pockets with high concentration of OBC population.

This is a basic motivational approach, as only proper motivated parents will take serious interest in educating their children. Secondly, residential schools should be set up in these areas for backward class students to provide a climate specially conducive to serious studies. All facilities in these schools including board and lodging, will have to be provided free of cost to attract students from poor and backward homes, separate Government Hostels for OBC students with the facilities will be another step in the right direction. A beginning on both these fronts will have to be made on a limited scale and selective basis. But the scope of these activities should be expanded as fast as the resources permit. Adult education programme and residential schools started on a selective basis will operate as growing-points of consciousness for the entire community and their multiplier effect is bound to be substantial.

Whereas several States are extended a number of *ad hoc* concessions to backward class students, few serious attempts have been made to integrate these facilities into a comprehensive scheme for a qualitative upgradation of educational environment available to OBC students. After all, education is the best catalyst of change and educating the backward classes is the surest way to improve their self image and raise their social status. As OBCs cannot afford the high wastage rates of our educational system, it is very important that their education is highly biased in favour of vocational training.

After all reservation in services will absorb only a very small percentage of the educated backward classes and the rest should be suitably equipped with vocational skills to enable them to get a return on having invested several years in education. It is also obvious that even if all the facilities are given to OBC students, they will not be able to compete on an equal footing with others in securing admission to technical and professional institutions. In view of this it is recommended that seats should be reserved for OBC students in all scientific, technical and professional institutions run by the Central Government as well as State Governments.

This reservation will fall under Article 15(4) of the Constitution and the quantum of reservation should be the same as in the Government services, *i.e.*, 27 per cent. Those States which have already reserved more than 27 per cent seats for OBC students will remain unaffected by this recommendation. While implementing the provisions for reservation it should also be

ensured that the candidates who are admitted against the reserved quota are able to derive full benefits of higher studies. It has been generally noticed that these OBC students coming from an impoverished cultural background, are not able to keep abreast with other students. It is, therefore, very essential that special coaching facilities are arranged for all such students in our technical and professional institutions. The concerned authorities should clearly appreciate that their jobs is not finished once candidates against reserved quota have been admitted to various institutions. In fact the real task starts only after that special coaching assistance to these students, not only these young people will feel frustrated and humiliated but the country will also be landed with ill-equipped and sub-standard engineers, doctors and other professionals.

### **Financial Assistance**

Vocational communities following hereditary occupations have suffered heavily as a result of industrialisation. Mechanical production and introductions of synthetic materials has robbed the village potter, oil crusher, blacksmith, carpenter, barber, etc. of their traditional means of livelihood and the pauperisation of these classes is a well-known phenomenon in the countryside. It has, therefore become very necessary that suitable institutional finance and technical assistance is made available to such members of village vocational communities who want to set up small-scale industries on their own. Similar assistance should also be provided to those promising OBC candidates who have obtained special vocational training. Of course, most State

Governments have created various financial and technical agencies for the promotions of small and medium scale industries. But it is well known that only the more influential members of the community are able to derive benefits from these agencies. In view of this, it is essential that separate financial institutions for providing financial and technical assistance are established for the backward classes. Some State Governments like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have already set up separate financial corporations etc., for OBCs. Cooperative Societies of occupational groups will also help a lot. But due care should be taken that all office-bearers and members of such societies belong to the concerned hereditary occupational groups and outsiders are not allowed to exploit them by infiltrating into such cooperatives.

The share of OBCs in the industrial and business life of the country is negligible and this partly explains their extremely low income levels. As a part of its overall strategy to uplift the backward classes, it is imperative that all State Governments are suitably advised and encouraged to create a separate network of financial and technical institutions to foster business and industrial enterprise among OBCs.

### **Structural Changes**

Reservations in Government employment and educational institutions, as also as possible financial assistance will remain mere palliatives unless the problems of backwardness is tackled at its root. Bulk of the small land-holders, tenants, agricultural

labour, impoverished village artisans, unskilled workers, etc. belong to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. "Apart from social traditions, the dominances by the top peasantry is exercised through recourse to informal bondage which arises mainly thorough money-lending, leasing out of small bits of land and providing house-sites and dwelling space to poor peasants.

As most of the functionaries of the Government are drawn from the top peasantry, the class and caste linkage between the functionaries of Government and the top peasantry remain firm. This also tills the socio-political balance in favour of the top peasantry and helps it in having its dominance over others." The net outcome of the situation is that notwithstanding their numerical preponderance, backward class continues to remain in mental and material bondage of the higher castes and rich peasantry. Consequently, despite constituting nearly 3/4th of the countries population, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes have been able to acquire a very limited political clout, even though adult franchise was introduced more than three decades back. Through their literal monopoly of means of production of higher castes are able to manipulate and coerce the backward classes into acting against their own interests. In view of this, until the stranglehold of the existing production relations is broken through radical land reforms, the abject dependence of under privileged classes on the dominant higher castes will continue indefinitely. In fact there is already a sizeable volume of legislation on the statue books to abolish zamindari, place ceilings on land holdings and distribute land to

the landless. But in actual practice its implementation has been halting, half-hearted and superficial. The States like Karnataka, Kerala and West Bengal which have gone about the job more earnestly have not only succeeded in materially helping the Backward Classes, but also reaped rich political dividends into the bargain. It is the Commission's firm Conviction that a radical transformation of the existing production relations is the most important single step that can be taken for the welfare and upliftment of all backward classes. Even if this is not possible in the industrial sector for various reasons, in the agricultural sector a change in this nature is both feasible and overdue. The Commission, therefore, strongly recommends that all the State Governments should be directed to enact and implement progressive land legislations so as to effect basic structural changes in the existing production relations in the countryside. At present surplus land is being allotted to SCs and STs. A part of the surplus land becoming available in future as a result of the operation of land ceiling laws etc. should also be allotted to the OBC landless labour.

- Certain parts of some occupational communities like Fishermen, Banjaras, Bansoforas, Khatwes etc. still suffer from the stigma of untouchability in some part of the country. They have been listed as O.B.Cs. by the Commission, but their inclusion in the lists of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes may be considered by the Government.
- Backward Classes Development Corporations should be set up both at the Central and State levels to

implement various socio-educational and economic measures for their advancement.

- A separate Ministry/Department for O.B.Cs. at the Centre and States should be created to safe-guard their interests.
- With a view to giving better representation to certain very backward parts of O.B.Cs. like the Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh, Neo-Buddhists in Maharashtra, Fishermen in the Coastal areas, Gujjars in J&K., it is recommended that areas of their concentration may be carved out into separate constituencies at the time of delimitation.

### **Central Assistance**

At present no Central Assistance is available to any State Government for implementing any welfare measures for Other Backward Classes. The 18 States and Union Territories which have undertaken such measures have to provide funds from their own resources.

During the Commission's tours practically every State Government pointed out that unless the Centre is prepared to liberally finance all special schemes for the upliftment of OBCs, it will be beyond the available resources of the States to undertake any worthwhile programme for the benefit of Other Backward Classes. The Commission fully shares the views of the State Governments in this matter and strongly recommends that all development programmes specially designed for Other



Backward Classes should be financed by the Central Government in the same manner and to the same extent as done in the case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Regarding the period of operation of the Commission's recommendations entire scheme should be reviewed after twenty years. We have advisedly suggested this span of one generation, as the raising of social consciousness is a generational progress. Any review at a shorter interval would be rather arbitrary and would not give a fair indication of the impact of our recommendations on the prevailing status and life-styles of O.B.Cs.

### **Implementation**

All the recommendations of the report are not yet implemented. The recommendation of reservations for OBC's in government services was implemented in 1993. As on 27 June 2008 there is still a backlog of 28, 670 OBC vacancies in government jobs. The recommendation of reservations in Higher educational institutes is implemented in 2008.

### **Criticism**

The National Sample Survey puts the figure at 32 per cent. There is substantial debate over the exact number of OBC's in India, with census data compromised by partisan politics. It is generally estimated to be sizable, but lower than the figures quoted by either the Mandal Commission or and National Sample Survey. There is also an ongoing controversy about the estimation logic used by Mandal commission for calculating OBC population.

Famous Indian Statistician, Mr. Yogendra Yadav who supports Reservations agrees that there is no empirical basis to the Mandal figure. According to him "It is a mythical construct based on reducing the number of SC/ST, Muslims and others and then arriving at a number." National Sample Survey's 1999-2000 round estimated around 36 per cent of the country's population is defined as belonging to the Other Backward Classes.

The proportion falls to 32 per cent on excluding Muslim OBCs. A survey conducted in 1998 by National Family Health Statistics puts the proportion of non-Muslim OBCs as 29.8 per cent. L R Naik, the only Dalit member in the Mandal Commission refused to sign the Mandal recommendations. He said that there are two social blocks among the OBCs: upper caste and upper OBCs and Most Backward Classes. He feared that upper OBCs would corner all the benefits of reservation. Here we shall present the study of the Mandal Commissions's list of the OBC for the state of West Bengal only for the sake of brevity. In this list, Urao has been listed as an OBC. On the other hand, it is already in the list of Scheduled Tribes for the state with a slight difference of spelling "Oraon". Similarly, Scheduled Tribes Kharia, Kherwar, Koda, Bhotia, Brijia, Gonda and Lakra, which are already declared STs for the state. Tharu is a widely studied scheduled tribe. Thapa is a synonym of ST Sherpa. Many famous ST surnames have been listed as OBC Mahato, etc. Other anthropologically famous scheduled tribes listed as OBC are Kuki, Lushei, Koli and Rohangia. Similar manipulation has been done with many Scheduled Castes also. For example in the state of West Bengal, Bhangi has been listed as OBC with a rider "excluding those in

the Scheduled Caste". On the other hand the SC list for West Bengal shows that Bhangi is an unconditional SC for the whole of the territory of the state. Halalkhor has also been listed as an OBC with a similar condition, but this caste is also an unconditional SC.

A sub-caste of Dom has been listed as OBC at place No. 126. Dom as a whole has been a Scheduled Caste for ages. Bahelia has been listed by its synonym Chirimar. Bagal is already there in the SC list at place number 1, with a spelling Bagll. Although Nat is an SC, its sub-caste Karwal-Nat has been made an OBC. Jaliya Kaiwartta is just the Sanskritised name of Machua listed as OBC. All the Nav-Buddhists have been include in the OBC list, which is again an anomaly, because the Nav-Buddhists enjoy their SC status. Not only synonyms or alternative spellings of the SCs and STs have been recorded as OBC, but also there are other types of manipulations like same OBC caste has been listed twice or sometimes thrice in the list of the same state.

An example of this type of manipulation is Kahar in Bihar list, Kewat. At any rate the list is vitiated by such inclusions. The Kuki tribes actually live in Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, none of which are neighbouring to West Bengal. Even if any member of the tribe migrates to West Bengal or anywhere else in India, either it retains its ST status of the mother state or becomes General population. It is difficult to believe that some Kuki tribes live in West Bengal as OBC. Lushai tribe live mainly in Mizoram and are the principal Mizo tribe. They are also found in Manipur as ST. Koli are found in a widespread area ranging

from Orissa to Rajasthan up to Karnatak. Rohangia. Introduction of such castes to the West Bengal OBC list seems to be an act of fertile brain and raises doubt whether any actual survey was done at all. At any rate a small number of these tribes could be present in the former East Bengal in areas adjoining former state of Assam and Myanmar before partition. Some OBC caste names given in the list are obsolete of forward castes. Tyagi is an upper caste, which lives in UP, Haryana and Delhi. This caste was earlier called Taga. But with a general trend of all the North Indian castes to Sanskritise their names, Taga people adopted a new name Tyagi which was similar to Taga. But still in the remote village especially by the illiterate people Tyagis are often called Taga. We find the name of Taga in Haryana Mandal list, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

The principles and norms set in the very beginning regarding the criterion for the Non-Hindu communities have been violated flagrantly, hence now the Roman Catholic is not a religion but a caste in the eyes of the Mandal Commission. Anglo-Indians, who are the off-springs of the British rulers, have also been made an Other Backward Caste. Although it has been decided at the outset that only occupational castes among the Muslims and Christians and the castes bearing the same name as a Hindu OBC or SC will be included as a Muslim or Christian OBC caste, the set rule was violated wherever political expediency dictated. For example Kayastha has been made an OBC which does not fulfill the criteria set for inclusion of non-Hindu castes.

A last word about credibility of the Mandal survey. Presence of obsolete and archaic caste names like Taga, Bhui-har, Domb, listing of Kuki, Lushai, Rohangia tribes in West Bengal which are not found in West Bengal today but actually some of each of them lived in East Bengal in undivided India neighbouring Tripura, Meghalaya etc., and many such factors cannot be explained unless it is assumed that the Mandal list is not result of a recent survey, but it has been compiled by editing the caste list of 1931 census. But the editing was most inefficient. These names could not have crept in unless the old united Bengla caste list of 1931 was just copied and some named SC & ST, as well as well known forward caste names were just deleted, to arrive at the current OBC list of Mandal. Every state's OBC list has the same story.

The entire list seems to be manipulated, but most carelessly and inefficiently manipulated. Most famous scheduled castes like Dusadh, Mochi, Domb and Bhangi have been put as OBCs in many states. If the Government does not reject this whole Mandal list, all the SCs and STs listed as OBC will have to be deleted from the respective SC and ST lists. Because the Mandal Commission was a constitutional body which had done a survey and this survey was done at a later date than the surveys for the SC and ST, which were done during the British period without the authority of our present Indian Constitution. Indeed any act done under the authority of Indian Constitution automatically supersedes any act of the British administration if there is an overlap or confusion.

## **Protest**

A decade after the commission gave its report, V.P. Singh, the Prime Minister at the time, tried to implement its recommendations in 1989. The criticism was sharp and colleges across the country held massive protests against it. Soon after, Rajiv Goswami, student of Delhi University, committed self-immolation in protest of the government's actions. His act further sparked a series of self-immolations by other college students and led to a formidable movement against job reservations for Backward Castes in India. First student to die due to self-immolation was Surinder Singh Chauhan on Sep 24, 1990.

## **Arguments against reservations**

*The opponents of the issue argue:*

- Allocating quotas on the basis of caste is a form of racial discrimination, and contrary to the right to equality. Although the exact relation between caste and race is far from well established
- As a consequence of legislating to provide reservations for Christians and Muslim, religious minorities in all government education institutions will be introduced which is contrary to the ideas of secularism, and is a form of anti-discrimination on the basis of religion.
- Most often, only economically sound people from the so-called lower castes will make use of most of the reserved seats, thus counteracting the spirit of

reservations. Political parties know reservations are no way to improve the lot of the poor and the backward. They support them because of self-interest of the “creamy layer”, who use the reservations to further their own family interests, and as a political flag of ‘achievement’ during election campaigns. In fact, several studies show that the OBC class is quite comparable with the general caste in terms of annual per capita consumption expenditure, and the top strata of OBC is ahead in a host of consumption areas.

- The quality of these elite institutes may go down, because merit is severely being compromised by reserving seats for certain caste-based communities.
- There are no efforts made to give proper primary education to truly deprived classes, so there is no need to reserve seats for higher studies. The government schools in India have absolutely no comparison to the public schools in the developed countries, and only about 65 per cent of the Indian population is literate. The critics argue that “reservation” only in higher institutions and jobs, without improving primary and secondary education, cannot solve this problem.
- The government is dividing people on the basis of castes for political advantages.
- The caste system is kept alive through these measures. Instead of coming up with alternative innovative ideas which make sure equal representation at the same time making the caste system irrelevant, the decision is only fortifying the caste system.

- The autonomy of the educational institutes are lost.
- Not everyone from the so-called upper classes are rich, and not all from so called lower classes are poor.
- The reservation policy of the Indian Congress will create a huge unrest in the Indian society. Providing quotas on the basis of caste and not on the basis of merit will deter the determination of many educated and deserving students of India.
- Multi-national companies will be deterred by this action of the government, and foreign investment in India may dry down, hurting the growth of the Indian economy. Doubtless, urgent actions to improve the lot of the majority, which has not benefited from development — not achieved after 55 years of reservations for scheduled castes — are essential. But this must not hazard improving the economy's competitiveness in a very competitive world.
- There are already talks of reservations in the private sector. If even after providing so many facilities to reserved categories during education, if there is no adequate representation of those people in the workforce, there must be some problems with the education system.

Critics of the Mandal Commission argue that it is unfair to accord people special privileges on the basis of caste, even in order to redress traditional caste discrimination. They argue that those that deserve the seat through merit will be at a disadvantage. They reflect on the repercussions of unqualified



candidates assuming critical positions in society. As the debate on OBC reservations spreads, a few interesting facts which raise pertinent question are already apparent. To begin with, do we have a clear idea what proportion of our population is OBC? According to the Mandal Commission it is 52 per cent. According to 2001 Indian Census, out of India's population of 1,028,737,436 the Scheduled Castes comprise 166,635,700 and Scheduled Tribes 84,326,240, that is 16.2 per cent and 8.2 per cent respectively. There is no data on OBCs in the census. However, according to National Sample Survey's 1999-2000 round around 36 per cent of the country's population is defined as belonging to the Other Backward Classes. The proportion falls to 32 per cent on excluding Muslim OBCs. A survey conducted in 1998 by National Family Health Statistics puts the proportion of non-Muslim OBCs as 29.8 per cent. The NSSO data also shows that already 23.5 per cent of college seats are occupied by OBCs. That's just 8.6 per cent short of their share of population according to the same survey. Other arguments include that entrenching the separate legal status of OBCs and SC/STs will perpetuate caste differentiation and encourage competition among communities at the expense of national unity. They believe that only a small new elite of educated Dalits, Adivasis, and OBCs benefit from reservations, and that such measures do nothing to lift the mass of people out of backwardness and poverty.

## **Arguments offered support of reservations**

- Affirmative Action has helped many - if not everyone from under-privileged and/or under-represented communities to grow and occupy top positions in the world's leading industries. Reservation in education is not the final solution, it is just one of the many solutions. Reservations is a means to increase representation of hitherto under-represented caste groups and thereby improve diversity on campus.
- Although Reservation schemes do undermine the quality of education but still affirmative Action schemes are in place in many countries including USA, South Africa, Malaysia, Brazil etc. It was researched in Harvard University that Affirmative Action programmes are beneficial to the under-privileged. The studies said that Blacks who enter elite institutions with lower test scores and grades than those of whites achieve notable success after graduation. They earn advanced degrees at rates identical to those of their white classmates. They are even slightly more likely than whites from the same institutions to obtain professional degrees in law, business and medicine. They become more active than their white classmates in civic and community activities.
- Although Reservation schemes do undermine the quality of education but still they are needed to provide social justice to the most marginalised and underprivileged is our duty and their human right.

Reservation will really help these marginalised people to lead successful lives, thus eliminating caste-based discrimination which is still widely prevalent in India especially in the rural areas..

- But meritocracy is meaningless without equality. First all people must be brought to the same level, whether it elevates a part or delevels another, regardless of merit. Only after that merit becomes meaningful. Privileged people have never known to go backward due to reservations or lack of “meritocracy”. Reservations have only slowed down the process of the ‘forward’ becoming richer and backward becoming poorer.
- In a perfectly functioning society the institutions and various walks of life must represent the many parts roughly in proportion to their share in population. In India it is clearly not the case and hence the need for reservations.
- India does not have the economic or institutional capacity for undertaking a grassroots based solution to the problem, so reservations remain the only practical solution for social anti-discrimination
- People who support reservations keenly invite all the anti-reservationists to lead the life of a backward class citizen and live within the means that they have for themselves. It is their contention that in a experimental set-up like this the differences in achievement/performance would disappear or reduce down to experimental errors/random error. Underlying idea being that everyone is born equal but into an

unequal circumstances. And when the circumstances have been a result of a social system then the system either needs to be abandoned or reformed.

- Reservations are a political necessity in India because vast influential parts of voting population see reservations as beneficial to themselves. All governments have supported maintaining and/or increasing reservations. Reservations are legal and binding. As shown by Gujjar agitations, increasing reservations is also essential for peacekeeping in India.
- Reservations will go a long way in capacity building with regard to the human resource of the country. In the long run, it has tremendous economic benefits as it will raise the productivity of the majority of the potential workforce of the country
- The government of India, is bound and empowered by the constitution of the country to secure for all citizens equality in social, economic and political sphere.

## **Namantar Andolan**

Namantar Andolan was started by Dalit Panthers. Namantar Andolan is a movement to change Marathwada University's name to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University. Marathwada is made up of five districts — Aurangabad, Parbhani, Beed, Nanded and Usmanabad — out of 28 districts that were part of the earlier Hyderabad state ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad. The Marathwada part of the state was merged with Maharashtra after its trifurcation in 1956. As per the 1971 census, the population of this region was

8,058,347. This consisted of 80 per cent Hindus; 9.52 per cent belonged to Scheduled Castes; 11.8 per cent Muslims, 7.2 per cent Buddhists, and the rest were of other communities. Marathwada is an economically backward region of the state. 82 per cent of the people are occupied in farming, as against the figure of 65 per cent for the whole state.

At that time, industrial activity was almost nil, with only two persons out of 1,000 engaged in industry compared to 100 industrial workers out of every 1,000 in Mumbai. Further, Dalits comprised about 17 per cent and 9.5 per cent of Scheduled Castes and 7.2 per cent of the population compared to about 12 per cent for the whole of Maharashtra. About 75 per cent of the Dalit population consisted of farm labourers, and 90 per cent of the Dalit lived below the poverty line. The literacy rate among the Dalits in Marathwada was about 19 per cent as compared to the general literacy rate of 35 per cent. Among the Dalits, the Mahar community was supposed to be relatively better off and socially more conscious and with a higher rate of literacy.

Unemployment was a severe problem in Marathwada. For example, on 23 March 1974, 2,000 youths who came to Parbhani town looking for jobs were told that only 40 posts were to be filled up. There was no scope for the youths in farming or in industry. Thus education was the only field where there was a concentration of Dalit youths. After one united march with Panthers there was a split in the students' advisory committee, allegedly provoked by Panthers. The differences of opinion among the leaders of the committee were also caused by the meeting

they had with Vasant Rao Patil. Those opposing the renaming move organised themselves under the banner of 'Marathwada Vidarthi Kirti Samiti'. This Samiti gave a call of colleges in Marathwada remained closed from 12 to 26 September 1977. The Samiti also organised a total Marathwada bandh on 19 September.

### **Dalit Buddhist movement**

The Dalit Buddhist movement is arguably the most influential of a series of 19th and 20th century Buddhist revival movements in India. It received its most substantial impetus from B. R. Ambedkar's call for the conversion of Dalits to Buddhism in the context of a caste based society that considered them to be at the lowest end of the hierarchy.

### **Origins**

Buddhism was once dominant through much of India, it had however begun to decline by the 12th century. The Buddhist revival began in India in 1891, when the Sri Lankan Buddhist leader Anagarika Dharmapala founded the Maha Bodhi Society. The Maha Bodhi Society mainly attracted upper-caste people, most of whom did not identify themselves specifically as Buddhists, seeing no significant difference between Buddhism and Hinduism.

## **South India**

In 1890, Pandit C. Ayodhya Dasa better known as Iyothee Thass, founded the Sakya Buddhist Society. The first president of the Indian Buddhist Association was the German born American Paul Carus, the author of *The Gospel of Buddha*. Thass, a Tamil Siddha physician, was the pioneer of the Tamil Dalit movement. He argued that Tamil Dalits were originally Buddhists.

He led a delegation of prominent Dalits to Henry Steel Olcott and asked for his help in the re-establishment of "Tamil Buddhism." Olcott helped Thass to visit Sri Lanka, where he received diksha from Bhikkhu Sumangala Nayake. After returning to India, Thass established the Sakya Buddhist Society in Madras with branches in many places including Karnataka. Thass established a weekly magazine called *Oru Paisa Tamizhan* in Chennai in 1907, which served as a newsletter linking all the new branches of the Sakya Buddhist Society. The magazine discussed traditions and practices of Tamil Buddhism, new developments in the Buddhist world, and the Indian subcontinent's history from the Buddhist point of view. Brahmananda Reddy, a Dalit leader of Andhra Pradesh, was also fascinated by Buddhism.

## **Uttar Pradesh**

In the early 20th century, the Barua Buddhists of Bengal under the leadership of Kripasaran Mahasthavir, founder of the Bengal Buddhist Association in Calcutta, established viharas in cities such as Lucknow, Hyderabad, Shillong and Jamshedpur. In

Lucknow, Bodhanand Mahastavir advocated Buddhism for Dalits. Born Mukund Prakash in a Bengali Brahmin family, he was orphaned at a young age, and was then raised in Benaras by an aunt.

He was initially attracted to Christianity, but became a Buddhist after a meeting with Buddhist monks from Ceylon at a Theosophical Conference in Benares. He later lived in Lucknow where he came in contact with Barua Buddhists, many of whom were employed as cooks by the British. In 1914, Prakash was ordained Bodhanand Mahastavir in Calcutta in the presence of Kripasaran Mahastvir. He began preaching Buddhism in Lucknow. He founded the Bharatiye Buddh Samiti in 1916, and set up a vihara in 1928. In his book *Mula Bharatavasi Aur Arya*, Mahastavir stated that the shudras were the original inhabitants of India, who were enslaved by the Aryans.

Bodhanand Mahastavir wrote another book on Buddhist rituals called *Baudha Dvicharya*. His associate, Chandrika Prasad Jigyasu, founded the Bahujan Kalyan Prakashan. The two co-authored a book on the life and teaching of the Buddha. Acharya Ishvardatt Medharthi of Kanpur also supported the cause of the Dalits. He had studied Pali at Gurukul Kangri and Buddhist scripture was well known to him. He was initiated into Buddhism by Gyan Keto and the Lokanatha in 1937. Gyan Keto born Peter Schoenfeldt was a German who arrived to Ceylon in 1936 and became a Buddhist. Although Medharthi heavily criticized the Indian caste system, he didn't criticize Hinduism. He claimed



that the Dalits were the ancient rulers of India and had been trapped into slavery by the Aryan invaders.

He also claimed that the sanatana dharma was the religion of “Adi Hindus”, and tried to reconcile Buddhism with the Sant Mat. Another Bhikkhu of Kanpur, Bhikshu Uttam, was a strong supporter of the Arya Samaj and the Jat Pat Todak Mandal, the anti-caste wing of the Arya Samaj.

## **B. R. Ambedkar**

At the Yeola conference in 1935, prominent Dalit leader B. R. Ambedkar declared that he would not die a Hindu, saying that it perpetuates caste injustices. Ambedkar was approached by various leaders of different denominations and faiths. Meetings were held to discuss the question of Dalit religion and the pros and cons of conversion. On May 22, 1936, an “All Religious Conference” was held at Lucknow. It was attended by prominent Dalit leaders including Jagjivan Ram, though Ambedkar could not attend it. At the conference, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, and Buddhist representatives presented the tenets of their respective religions in an effort to win over Dalits. Buddhist monk Lokanatha visited Ambedkar’s residence at Dadar on June 10, 1936 and tried to persuade him to embrace Buddhism. Later in an interview to the Press, Lokanatha said that Ambedkar was impressed with Buddhism and that his own ambition was to convert all Dalits to Buddhism. In 1937, Lokanatha published a pamphlet *Buddhism Will Make You Free*, dedicated to the Depressed Classes of India from his press in Ceylon.

In early 1940s, Ambedkar visited Acharya Ishvardatt Medharthi's Buddhpuri school in Kanpur. Medharthi had earlier been initiated into Buddhism by Lokanatha, and by the mid-1940s, he had close contacts with Ambedkar. For a short while, Ambedkar also took Pali classes from Medharthi in Delhi. Bodhananda Mahastvir and B. R. Ambedkar first met in 1926, at the "Indian Non-Brahmin Conference" convened by Shahu IV of Kolhapur.

They met on two more occasions and for a short while in the 1940s, where they discussed dhamma. Mahastavir objected to Dr Ambedkar's second marriage because his bride was a Brahmin. Later, his followers actively participated in Ambedkar's Republican Party of India.

### **Dalit Buddhism movement after Ambedkar's death**

The Buddhist movement was somewhat hindered by Dr. Ambedkar's death so shortly after his conversion. It did not receive the immediate mass support from the Untouchable population that Ambedkar had hoped for. Division and lack of direction among the leaders of the Ambedkarite movement have been an additional impediment. According to the 2001 census, there are currently 7.95 million Buddhists in India, at least 5.83 million of whom are Buddhists in Maharashtra. This makes Buddhism the fifth-largest religion in India and 6 per cent of the population of Maharashtra, but less than 1 per cent of the overall population of India. The Buddhist revival remains concentrated in two states: Ambedkar's native Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh

— the land of Bodhanand Mahastavir, Acharya Medharthi and their associates.

## **Developments in Uttar Pradesh**

Acharya Medharthi retired from his Buddhapuri school in 1960, and shifted to an ashram in Haridwar. He turned to the Arya Samaj and conducted vedic yajnas all over India. After his death, he was cremated according to Arya Samaj rites. His Buddhapuri school became embroiled in property disputes. His follower, Bhoj Dev Mudit, converted to Buddhism in 1968 and set up a school of his own. Rajendranath Aherwar appeared as an important Dalit leader in Kanpur. He joined the Republican Party of India and converted to Buddhism along with his whole family in 1961.

In 1967, he founded the Kanpur branch of “Bharatiya Buddh Mahasabha”. He held regular meetings where he preached Buddhism, officiated at Buddhist weddings and life cycle ceremonies, and organised festivals on Dr. Ambedkar’s Jayanti, Buddha Jayanti, Diksha Divas, and Dr Ambedkar Paranirvan Divas. The Dalit Buddhist movement in Kanpur gained impetus with the arrival of Dipankar, a Chamar bhikkhu, in 1980. Dipankar had come to Kanpur on a Buddhist mission and his first public appearance was scheduled at a mass conversion drive in 1981. The event was organised by Rahulan Ambawadekar, an RPI Dalit leader. In April 1981, Ambawadekar founded the Dalit Panthers inspired by the Maharashtra Dalit Panthers. The event met with severe criticism and opposition from Vishwa Hindu Parishad and was banned. In 2002, Kanshi Ram, a popular

out-caste political leader from a Sikh religious background, announced his intention to convert to Buddhism on October 14, 2006, the fiftieth anniversary of Ambedkar's conversion. He intended for 20,000,000 of his supporters to convert at the same time. Part of the significance of this plan was that Ram's followers include not only Untouchables, but persons from a variety of castes, who could significantly broaden Buddhism's support. However, he died October 9, 2006 after a lengthy illness; he was cremated as per Buddhist rituals. Another popular Dalit leader, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, has said that she and her followers will embrace Buddhism after the BSP gains control of the government.

## **Maharashtra**

Japanese-born Bhadant Nagarjun Surai Sasai is an important Buddhist leader in India. Sasai came to India in 1966 and met Nichidatsu Fuji, whom he helped with the Peace Pagoda at Rajgir. He fell out with Fuji, however, and started home, but, by his own account, was stopped by a dream in which a figure resembling Nagarjuna appeared and said, "Go to Nagpur".

In Nagpur, he met Wamanrao Godbole, the person who had organised the conversion ceremony for Dr. Ambedkar in 1956. Sasai claims that when he saw a photograph of Dr. Ambedkar at Godbole's home, he realised that it was Ambedkar who had appeared in his dream.

At first, Nagpur folk considered Surai Sasai very strange. Then he began to greet them with “Jai Bhim” and to build viharas. In 1987 a court case to deport him on the grounds that he had overstayed his visa was dismissed, and he was granted Indian citizenship. Sasai is one of the main leaders of the campaign to free the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya from Hindu control.